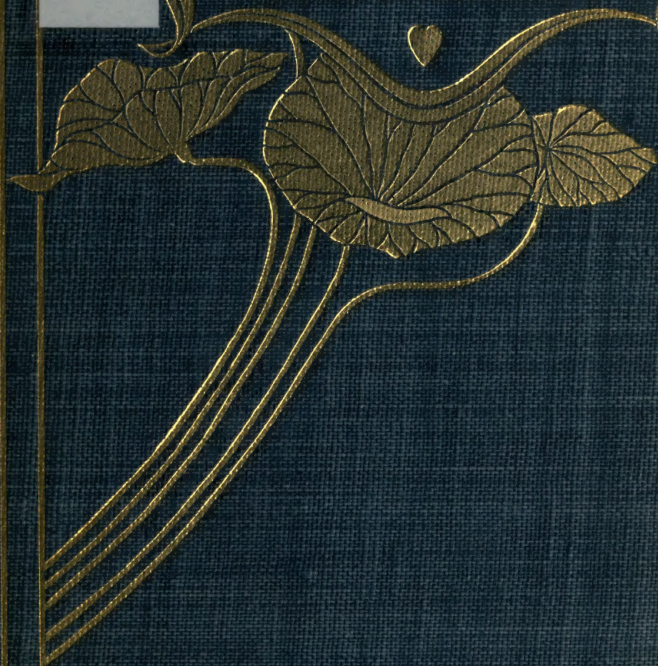


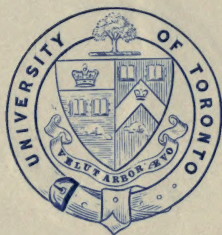
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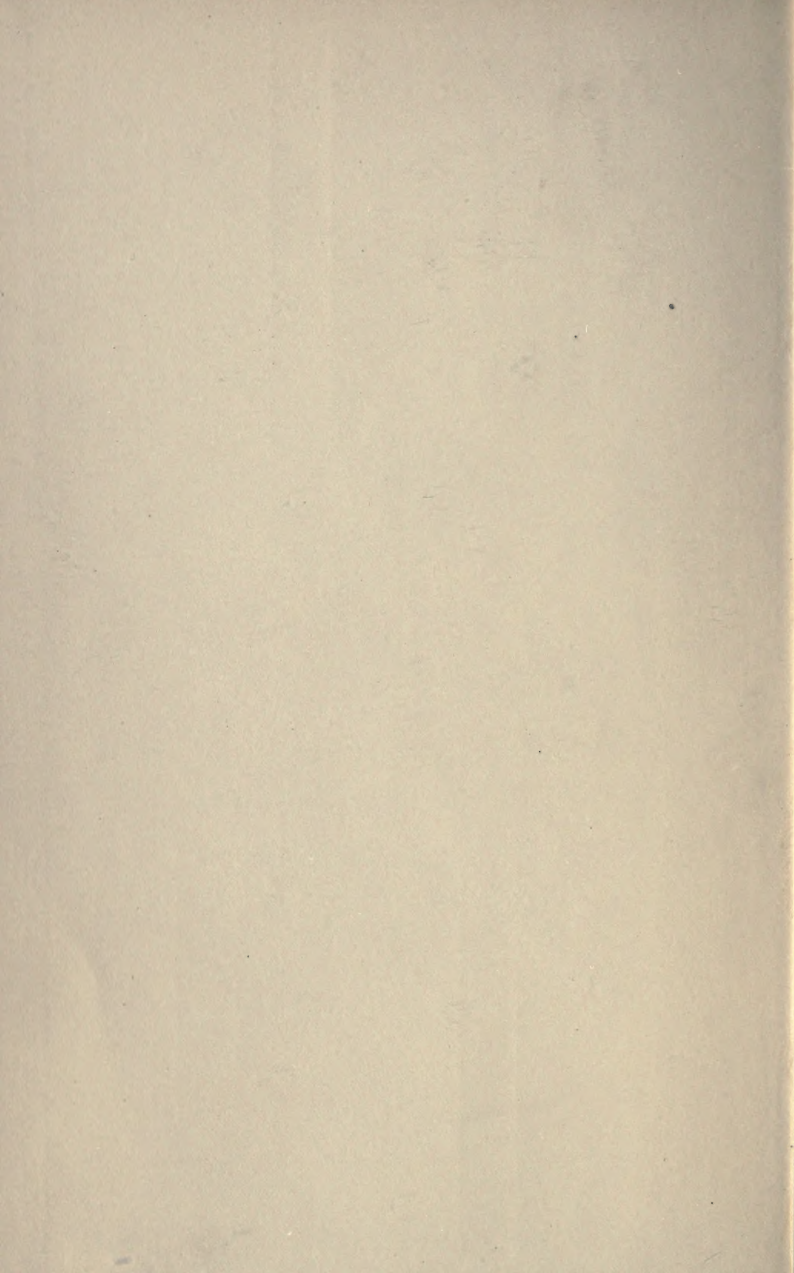


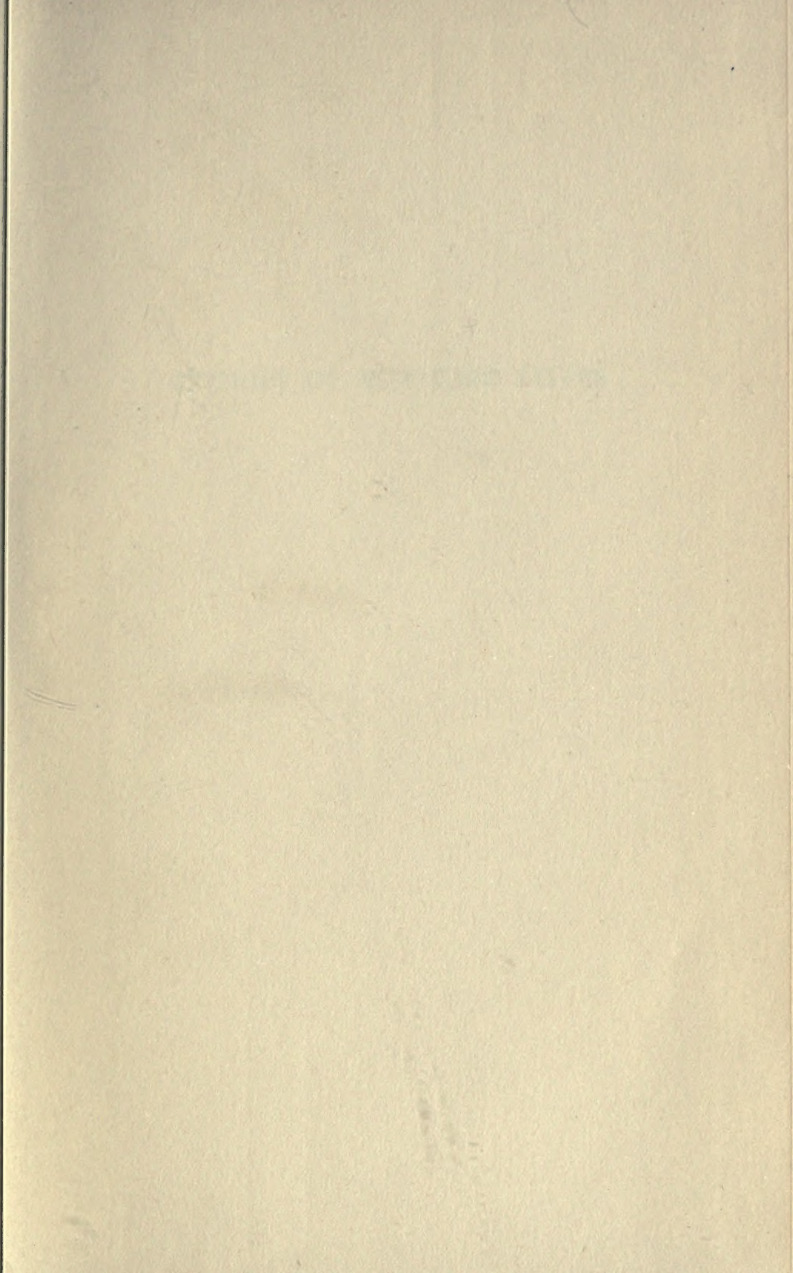
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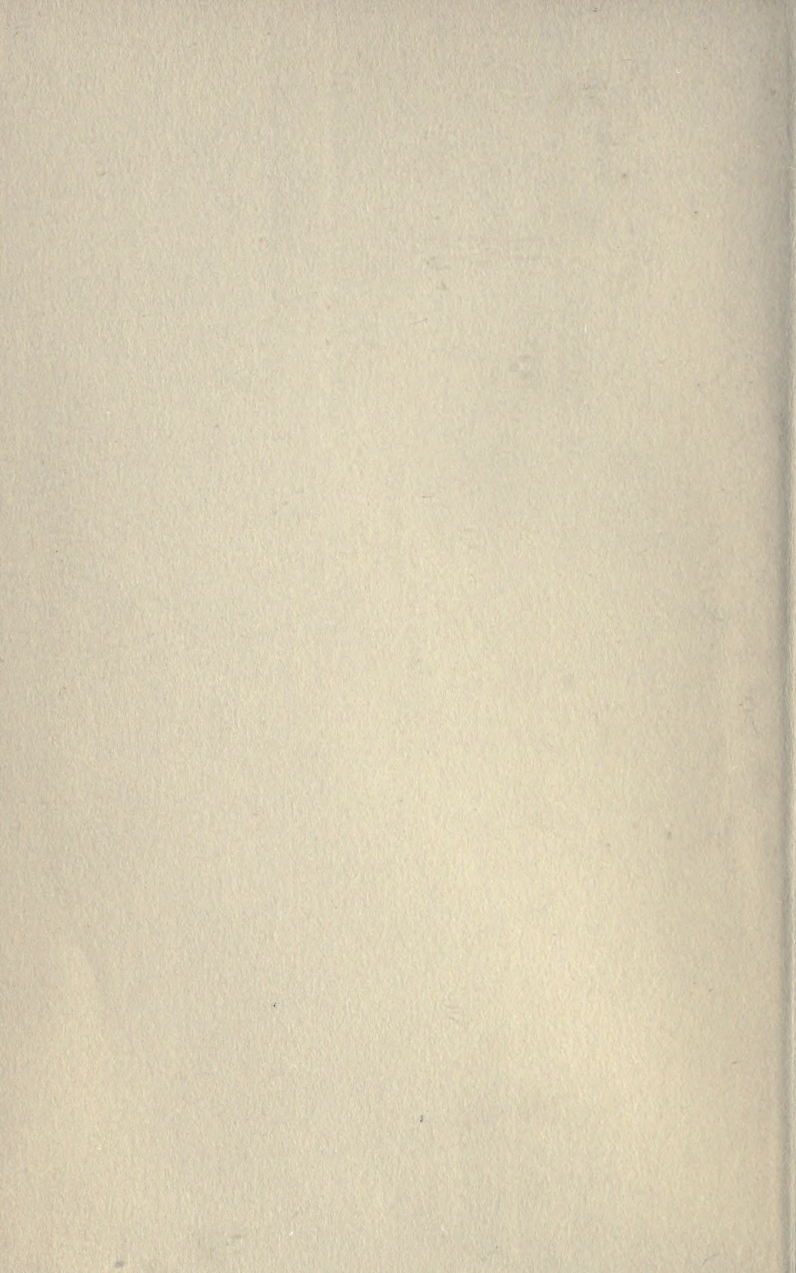
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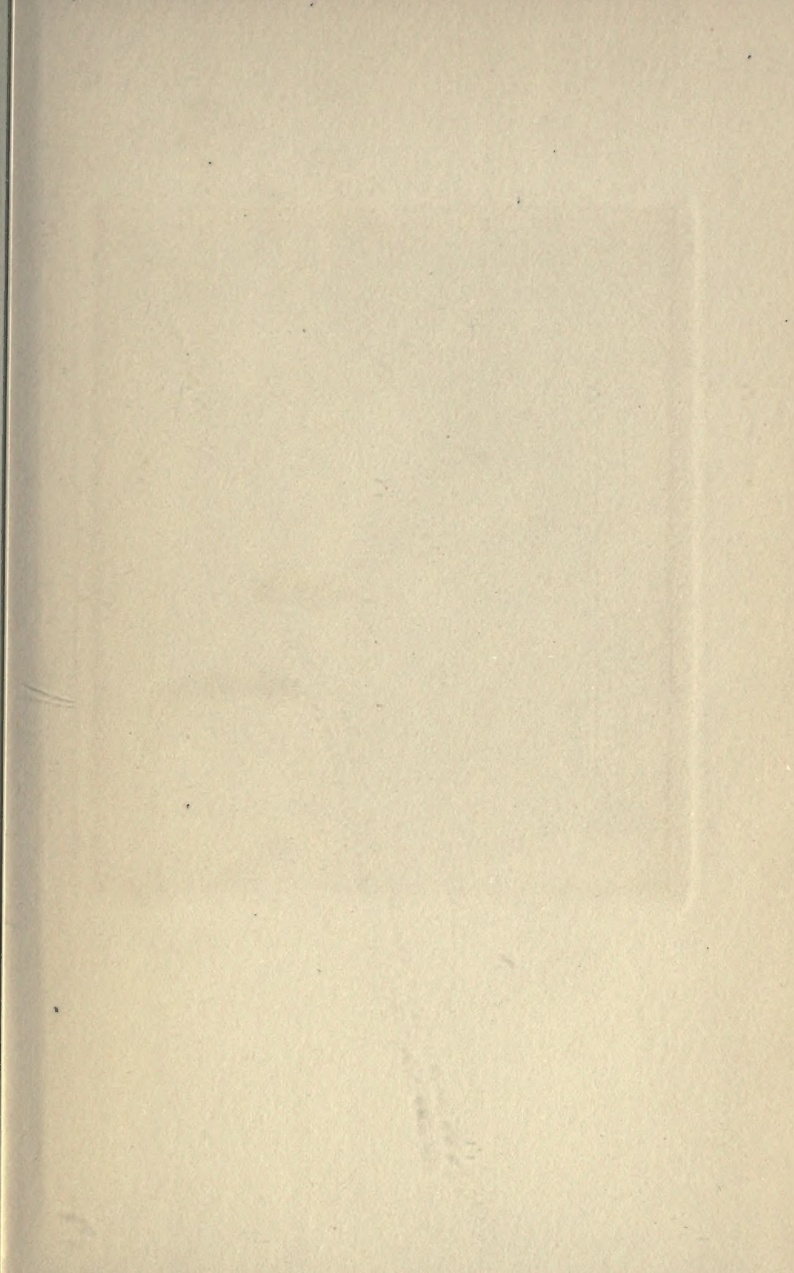


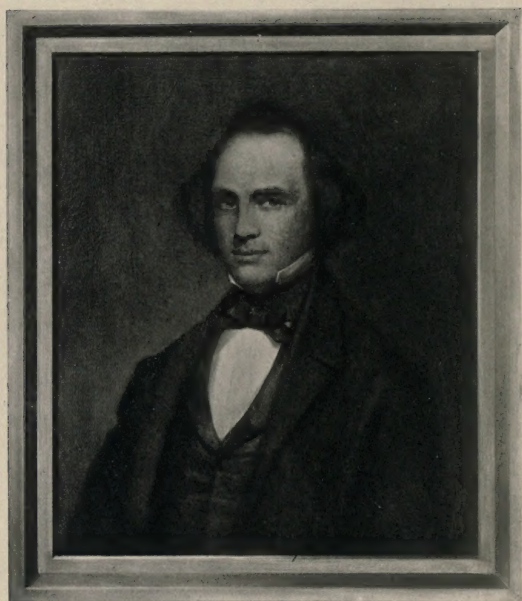




STORIES OF AUTHORS' LOVES

STORIES OF AFRICAN LOVES





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# Stories of Authors' Loves

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BY CLARA E. LAUGHLIN

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WITH FORTY-FIVE PHOTOGRAPHURE AND  
DUOGRAPHURE RAPPROCHTURES OF  
PORTRAITS AND VIEWS

VOL. II.



ANTHONY HAWTHORNE

From the oil portrait in the possession of Julian Hawthorne, Rep.

375585  
21.2.40

PHILADELPHIA

J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY

1909



NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

From the oil portrait in the possession of Julian Hawthorne, Esq.

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# Stories of Authors' Loves

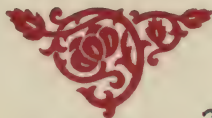
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BY CLARA E. LAUGHLIN

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WITH FORTY-FIVE PHOTOGRAVURE AND  
DUOGRAVURE REPRODUCTIONS OF  
PORTRAITS AND VIEWS

VOL. II.



375585  
21.2.40

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From F. T. Stuart's engraving after a daguerreo- type. By permission of Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co.	

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## THE BROWNING—THE MOST IDEAL OF LOVE-STORIES

THE good things of God are boundless; each of us may enjoy as much of them as he knows how. So true is this, in all earthly experience, that nearly all of us are sure it is even truer in heavenly experience; indeed, some persons by no means foolish claim that Heaven and Hell, so called, are the same, the difference being in the individual, those who are attuned to purity and joy finding it ecstasy, and those who are not so attuned finding it sheer misery, much as persons without musical taste find the rarest, grandest harmonies, or as creatures bred in the dark would find the genial glory of sunlight. Certainly, if one believe in future punishment, one cannot conceive

## STORIES OF AUTHORS' LOVES

more exquisite anguish than this,—to know that one has entered into a world of beauty that he cannot see, into a world of holiness that he cannot appreciate, into a world of joy and love that he cannot share. True, most of us—perhaps all of us—live here in some such sense of insufficiency to contain, or to apprehend, all that life offers us of good. But *There!* Will it not come home to us, in a terrible moment, all that we have missed in the past, and all in the future that our insufficiency shuts us out from?

And what things shall we regret having missed? Not power, I opine, with all its weariness of responsibility; not place, for “the mind is its own place;” not anything but Love, and the fruits of the spirit of love. These we shall sigh to have apprehended so ill—when we are come into the Kingdom whose Heart is Love.

Love is the great manifestation of

## THE BROWNINGS

Himself which God sends into the world to quicken the hearts of men and put them in tune with divinity The power to feel Love is the measure of man's divinity, and any man may have as much of this power as he will exercise. It is the one realm in which whosoever will may be a King.

But to be King one must have more than mere will to occupy first place ; one must have the will to be worthy of first place, for the rule of Love goes not by primogeniture, but by sheer kingliness. "Whoever lives true life will love true love," and whoever lives truest life will love best. But so many are content to feed on the husks of the prodigal when they might fatten the soul on the rare fruits of the Elect of Love ; so many live on husks and never know that there is anything better in the world of love.

Once in a while, however, it seems as if God set out to demonstrate to human-kind what love can mean. Once He

## STORIES OF AUTHORS' LOVES

became Incarnate Love, and many times since He has seemed to become incarnate in some lesser way in order to make newly clear to us the possibilities of certain phases of Love. He knows that we are children, and He gives us examples, patterns, standards by which to measure, wistfully, our own content.

He has given many wonderful demonstrations of what love between a man and a woman may mean, but He has given none that has touched a higher plane of spiritual exaltation, none that has seemed to take more hold on Heaven itself, than the famous love-story of the Brownings. For the rest of time all aspiring mortals will regard the story of that love wistfully, and many will strain strenuously towards its standard, and, so straining, find Love's best guerdon. For love is saving only when it makes us strain and reach, nor lets us bide from it until Heaven be ours—and perhaps not even then.

## THE BROWNING

One of the many deeply significant things about love is that though one may, or rather does, frequently enjoy it passively without price, one must almost always pay dear for the precious privilege of loving. Shakespeare's much-quoted truism, "The course of true love never did run smooth," is only another way of saying that true love inevitably costs something, in sacrifice, in adjustment, in bravery of opposition, or in some other kind. There is no coincidence in the fact that greatest love always grows in greatest stress. It is mere cause and effect, because great stress helps on great love and great love brings great stress.

When He planned "the most ideal of love-stories," God chose the most unusual of heroines. He frequently puts strongest souls in frailest bodies, but this time He put a soul which has been called "second only to Shakespeare's in clearness and delicacy of spiritual percep-

## STORIES OF AUTHORS' LOVES

tion," into a body so frail that 'twas said never before "was seen a human frame which seemed so nearly a transparent veil for a celestial and immortal spirit."

And God chained this body to a darkened room, and racked it with suffering, and kept it so through long, long years in the shadow of crushing mental anguish, too; "and so," in the words of Elizabeth Barrett herself, written to Robert Browning when she was nearly forty years of age,—

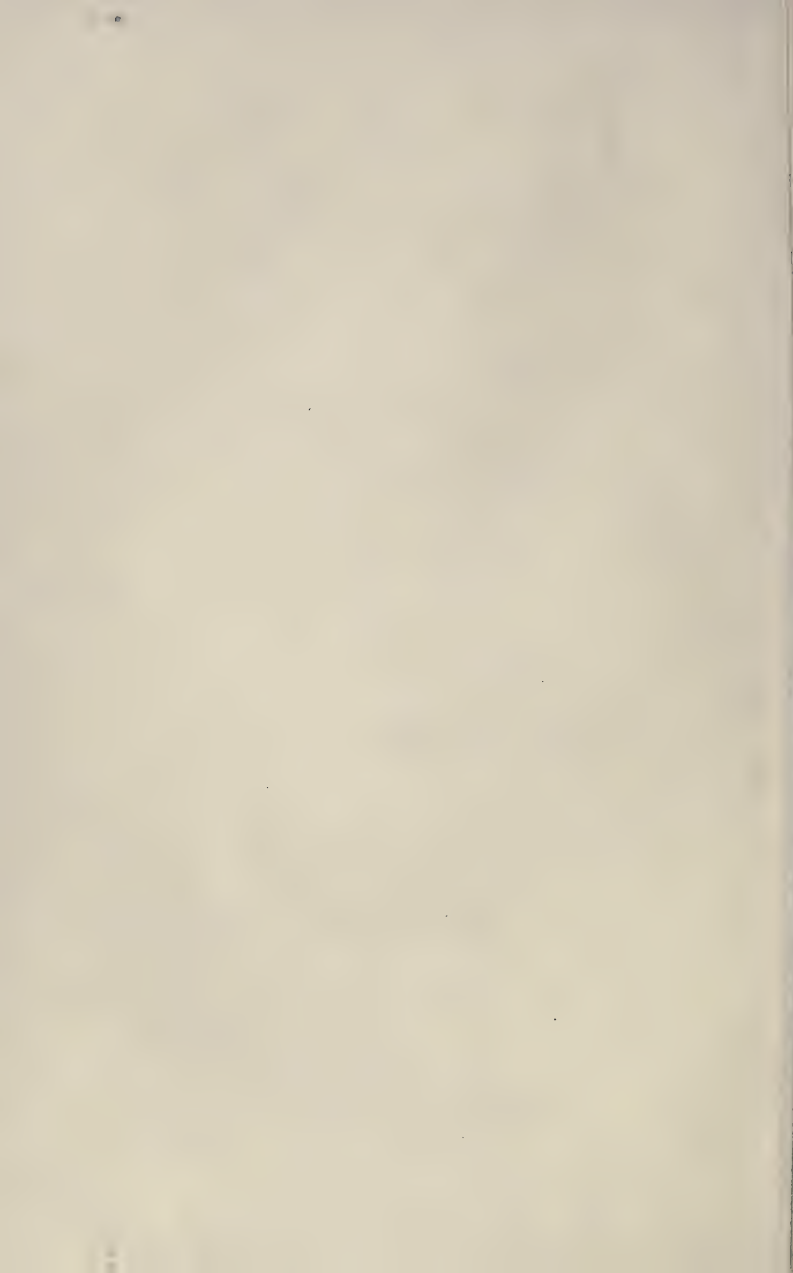
"Time passed, and passed—and . . . I seemed to stand at the edge of the world with all done, and no prospect (as appeared at one time) of ever passing the threshold of one room again; then I turned to thinking (after the greatest sorrow of my life had given me time and room to breathe) that I had stood blind in this temple that I was about to leave—that I had seen no Human nature, that my brothers and sisters of the earth were *names* to me, that I had beheld no great mountain or river,—nothing, in fact. I was as a man dying who had not read Shakespeare, and it was too late!"



ROBERT BROWNING



ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING



## THE BROWNINGS

She might have said, "as a woman dying who had not felt joy." But she had hungered for joy, and "Blessed are they which do hunger . . . for they shall be filled."

For thirty-nine years she had lived in isolation, she who loved humankind so passionately and had such marvellously sympathetic appreciation of all its woes ; for thirty-nine years she had lived almost wholly apart from such rare companionship as she was pre-eminently fitted to enjoy. She loved the sunshine, and with all her soul yearned for sunny Italy, but the selfish will of an obdurate father kept her chained to bleak England, whose damp, cold air from September to June was torture to her. She was a poet, and shut away from the country, in smoky London ; and, more than all, she was a woman capable, as she afterwards proved, of the most exalted love imaginable, but for nine and thirty years, till the bloom of her youth had all worn

## STORIES OF AUTHORS' LOVES

off, she knew not the touch of Love. She knew not Love, and yet tried to find poetic expression for her soul, whose very essence was Love! Well might she have felt, as her fortieth year loomed in near prospect, that she was "as a man dying who had not read Shakespeare, and it was too late!"

Forty years God kept Moses in the wilderness, herding the sheep of Jethro, that he might learn the lessons necessary to conduct Israel forty other years through that wilderness to the Promised Land. Forty years God kept Elizabeth Barrett in the wilderness of Unfulfilment, that she might hunger and hunger and be, when she came at last into Love, just one mighty embodiment of yearning for the milk and honey of the Blest.

Living in the wilderness, she sang the songs of the wilderness,—wistful songs, full of heart-hunger and the taste of tears and the echo of long, sleepless

## THE BROWNING

nights alone with Pain. They were brave songs, noble songs, and many of them sounded as high and clear a note of splendid resignation as one may find in poesy. But they were the songs of the wilderness, notwithstanding. Among them, included in the exquisite sonnets of her volume of 1844—the volume to which she owed her acquaintance with Robert Browning—was this one, called

### PAST AND FUTURE.

“ My future will not copy fair my past  
On any leaf but Heaven's. Be fully done,  
Supernal Will ! I would not fain be one  
Who, satisfying thirst and breaking fast  
Upon the fulness of the heart, at last  
Says no grace after meat. My wine has run  
Indeed out of my cup, and there is none  
To gather up the bread of my repast  
Scattered and trampled ; yet I find some good  
In earth's green herbs, and streams that bubble  
up  
Clear from the darkling ground,—content  
until  
I sit with angels before better food :

## STORIES OF AUTHORS' LOVES

Dear Christ ! When Thy new vintage fills my  
cup,  
This hand shall shake no more, nor that wine  
spill."

She prophesied better than she knew. It was to a Far Country she looked, when she hoped to "sit with angels before better food," but that Kingdom was close at hand for her, even as, for the Elect, Heaven often begins before flesh is put off. Some, dying, have a foretaste of glory, as if it descended and enveloped them while yet in the body ; for others—pure spirits like Elizabeth Barrett's—Heaven begins, oftentimes, long before earth is left behind.

Heaven opened, in January, 1845, for Elizabeth Barrett. Early in that month Robert Browning first read her poems, and wrote her a letter of delighted appreciation. He knew something of Miss Barrett through a mutual friend,—Mr. John Kenyon,—but had never read any of her writings until that time. Once,

## THE BROWNING

years before, Mr. Kenyon had asked the young poet if he would not like to meet Miss Barrett, who was also a poet, and Mr. Browning had replied, of course, that he would. But Miss Barrett was too ill to be seen, and nothing came of the proposition. Years passed, and the two poets went their separate ways; it was not yet time, evidently, for glory to descend upon them; not yet were they meet for it. Miss Barrett, in her darkened, quiet room, read the works of the young man Browning; read *Paracelsus* and *Sordello* and *Bells and Pomegranates*, and *Strafford* and *Pippa Passes*, and all the dramas of those early, unrecognized years, and marvelled at their fire and power, though wishing, as she confessed in her second letter to him, that he "would give the public a poem unassociated directly or indirectly with the stage, for a trial on the popular heart."

His letter to her, therefore, was

## STORIES OF AUTHORS' LOVES

scarcely from the hand of a stranger, and he knew that he was not strange to her, for when he read her "Lady Geraldine's Courtship" he came upon these lines :

"There, obedient to her praying, did I read  
aloud the poems  
Made to Tuscan flutes, or instruments more  
various of her own ;  
Read the pastoral parts of Spenser, or the subtle  
interflowings  
Found in Petrarch's sonnets—here's the book,  
the leaf is folded down !  
Or at times a modern volume, Wordsworth's  
solemn-thoughted idyl,  
Howitt's ballad-verse, or Tennyson's enchanted  
reverie,—  
Or from Browning some 'Pomegranate,' which,  
if cut deep down the middle,  
Shows a heart within, blood-tinctured, of a  
veined humanity."

Indeed, two years before she ever had intercourse of any kind with the author of "Pomegranates," she wrote to an American editor of Browning :

## THE BROWNINGS

“I do assure you I never saw him in my life—do not even know him by correspondence—and yet whether through fellow-feeling for Eleusinian mysteries, or whether through the more generous motive of appreciation of his powers, I am very sensitive to the thousand and one stripes with which the assembly of critics doth expound its vocation over him.”

But this, of course, Robert Browning did not know,—that in a sick-room, in Wimpole Street, a woman, a poet, had resented his chastisement and yearned over him, and followed his career with eager interest while yet he pursued his way oblivious of her existence.

Probably it was that reference to his “Pomegranates” that emboldened him to write to her as to one who knew something of his struggling, and could publicly say a good word for him when recognition of his work was cold and scant.

At any rate, Elizabeth Barrett was delighted to get that letter. It mat-

## STORIES OF AUTHORS' LOVES

tered not to her that neither the critics nor the reading public approved Robert Browning; she hailed him as a great mind and a great artist, and his appreciation of her work was exceeding sweet to her. He said, in that first letter, "I love these works with all my heart—and I love you, too." He was attracted to the woman who wrote such poems; and when he remembered how near, once, he had come to seeing her and knowing her face to face, he felt, he said,—

"As at some untoward passage in my travels, as if I had been close, so close, to some world's wonder in chapel or crypt, only a screen to push and I might have entered, but there was some slight, so it now seems, slight and just sufficient bar to admission, and the half-opened door shut and I went home many thousands of miles, and the sight was never to be!"

To which Elizabeth Barrett answered, with her characteristic humility,—

"You know, if you had entered the 'crypt,' you might have caught cold, or been tired to

## THE BROWNINGS

death, and *wished* yourself 'a thousand miles off' ; which would have been worse than travelling them. It is not my interest, however, to put such thoughts in your head about its being 'all for the best,' and I would rather hope (as I do) that what I lost by one chance I may recover by some future one. Winters shut me up as they do dormices' eyes ; in the Spring, *we shall see.*"

And he replied that he would "joyfully wait for the delight of your friendship, and the Spring, and my chapel-sight after all !"

In the mean time, it was long to Spring, and letters fairly flew between the two poets who had so surely "found each other," though they had never met face to face.

It was May 21 before she was well enough to receive him for a little time, and in the few months of their correspondence something like seven-and-twenty letters had passed between them, or about one a week each,—letters which developed a wonderful commu-

## STORIES OF AUTHORS' LOVES

nity of interests, and which made Robert Browning mad with impatience to see and hold converse with the woman who so thrall'd and satisfied his highest longings after companionship. But she? She dreaded seeing him, even while she yearned for it. She was so little and frail and plain of face, and such a victim of draughts, so at the mercy of every evil wind that blows. He was so vigorous, so *alive*, so full of energy, so unused to suffering. How would he bear with her? And if he had admired her mind, in her poems and letters, wouldn't it shock him terribly to find her body so poor and unattractive? Ah, surely, the delights of companionship were for happier women, whose cheeks were not furrowed by tears and blanched by pain, and past the bloom of youth, withal!

She told him so, giving it as her "now honest impression" that no "least straw of pleasure" could go to him from knowing her "otherwise than on paper."

## THE BROWNINGS

"There is nothing to see in me," she said, "nor to hear in me—I never learnt to talk as you do in London ; although I can admire that brightness of carved speech in Mr. Kenyon and others. If my poetry is worth anything to any eye, it is the flower of me. I have lived most and been most happy in it, and so it has all my colors ; the rest of me is nothing but a root, fit for the ground and the dark."

And Mr. Browning retorted in fine pretence of indignation, that he felt her mistrust of him no less "because she don't fear I shall make mainprise of the stray cloaks and umbrellas down-stairs, or turn an article for Colburn's on her sayings and doings up-stairs," but only mistrusted his "common sense—nay, uncommon and dramatic-poet's sense, if I am put on asserting it!" Whereunto Miss Barrett, ashamed of her shyness, replied that the mistrust she felt was of herself, and not of him, and begged that he would be so good as to overlook it,

## STORIES OF AUTHORS' LOVES

whatever it was, and come to see her on Tuesday afternoon at three o'clock. In all the months of expectancy, when he looked forward so eagerly to "Spring, and my chapel-sight, after all," he had been punctiliously careful never to inquire anything about her. What she chose to tell him, in her letters, he received with reverent thankfulness, but never a question would he ask of another, except the courteous query of Mr. Kenyon, when mention was made of her, "Is she well?" With the utter delicacy which characterized him in all his bearing towards her, he refused to know anything about her which she did not grant him to know ; he refused even to walk down her street, past her house, until the day she gave him permission to call on her. This she knew by his own admission, and it rather frightened than assured her. Had he any idea what to expect? Howbeit, one could not be silly ; let him come and see.

## THE BROWNINGS

So he came, and stayed an hour and a half, and went home and wrote her a little note, asking if he tired her or talked too loud, or in any way jeopardized his chances for further visits. And she wrote that there was "nothing wrong . . . and there was everything right" about his visit, and repetitions of it must ever be a delight to her. Whereupon——! Robert Browning, the vigorous, the active, the travelled, the petted young man of London society, sat down and poured out his soul to the lonely little woman in the darkened sick-room, and told her that he had no other wish than that he might always be near her, in all her frailty and all her strength.

At least, we suppose that is what he wrote, judging by her reply and his subsequent letters, but that letter itself was destroyed, by common consent, and is the only one missing in all that passed between them. Whatever he said in it, we know it was a declaration of love,

## STORIES OF AUTHORS' LOVES

and doubtless a very ardent one, because nearly six months afterwards, when matters had at last been settled between them, he spoke in another letter of that one returned to him and by him burned. "Poor letter!" he said, "yet I should have been vexed and offended *then* to be told I *could* love you better than I did already. 'Live and *learn*!' Live and love you—dearest."

To the "poor letter," which she very humbly took for an outpouring of sweet sympathy which the chivalrous poet, in his haste, mistook for love, she replied gently but very firmly that he did not know what pain he gave her "in speaking so wildly," and that he must "forget at once, and forever" having said such things at all.

She saw in him a rarely chivalrous soul, prone vastly to overestimate her, she believed, and to be over-tender with her, perhaps, "for pity's sake." And with her whole soul she shrank from the

## THE BROWNINGS

idea of his falling in love with her, under the impulse of this tenderness, and so taking, as it seemed to her, a very millstone of frailty on his hands and heart, to be a burden to him throughout life. She had no mind to be so loved, and in this protest of heart she wrote that one of her famous Portuguese sonnets which has been called the most peerless of them all, unexcelled by any in the language.

“If thou must love me, let it be for nought  
Except for love’s sake only. Do not say  
‘I love her for her smile—her look—her way  
Of speaking gently,—for a trick of thought  
That falls in well with mine, and certes brought  
A sense of pleasant ease on such a day’—  
For these things in themselves, Belovèd, may  
Be changed, or change for thee,—and love so  
wrought  
May be unwrought so. Neither love me for  
Thine own dear pity’s wiping my cheeks dry,—  
A creature might forget to weep, who bore  
Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby!  
But love me for love’s sake, that evermore  
Thou mayst love on, through love’s eternity.”

## STORIES OF AUTHORS' LOVES

That he could see in her a creature so adorable, a spirit so radiant as to inspire his profoundest reverence, his most ecstatic love, she could not realize. Always her greater age, her frail, frail health, her timid manner, her unwisdom of many things that she esteemed highly because she had them not, seemed to her to make any acceptance of his proffered love mere selfishness in her of a kind not to be excused. And so she withdrew and withdrew from him in her conviction that to yield to him would be to do him harm, until finally he convinced her, finally he won her.

It was September when he gained her consent, not to marry him, but to *hope* to marry him if ever she got any better in health. They threshed over the whole question of her weakness and melancholy, he clinching the argument in such manner as this—from one of his letters :

“I desire in this life (with very little fluctuation for a man and too weak a one) to live and

## THE BROWNINGS

just write out certain things which are in me, and so save my soul. I would endeavor to do this if I were forced to 'live among lions' as you once said—but I should best do this if I lived quietly with myself and with you. That you cannot dance like Cerito does not materially disarrange this plan—so that I might (beside the perpetual incentive and sustainment and consolation) get, over and above the main reward, the incidental, particular, and unexpected happiness of being allowed when not working to rather occupy myself with watching you, than with certain other pursuits I might be otherwise addicted to—*this*, also, does not constitute an obstacle, as I see obstacles."

Nor did he see, in their comparative lack of means, any obstacle. True, he would have to give up the luxury of perfect leisure to do as he liked, to write as he felt need and so "save his soul," and would have, probably, to devote no little time to work as a literary "hack," but *that* he counted no hardship—in fact, he counted nothing a hardship which could be shared with her—and

## STORIES OF AUTHORS' LOVES

finally, after much impassioned pleading, which is so wonderful in the quality of love it expresses that one is sorely tempted to quote page after page of the two bulky printed volumes of it, he won from her a promise

“that none, except God and your will, shall interpose between you and me . . . I mean, that if He should free me within a moderate time from the trailing chain of this weakness, I will then be to you whatever at that hour you shall choose . . . whether friend or more than friend . . . a friend to the last in any case. So it rests with God and you.”

In gratitude for that promise he wrote, years after, begging her recollection of the time they plighted their troth, and saying :

“I am named and known by that moment's feat ;  
There took my station and degree ;  
So grew my own small life complete,  
As nature obtained her best of me—  
One born to love you, sweet !”

## THE BROWNING

Meanwhile, there was another obstacle which even Browning had to acknowledge, but by which he refused to be worsted. There was Miss Barrett's tyrannical father, whose petty, violent jealousy of his own supremacy in the lives of his children had made it necessary for all Elizabeth's friendship with Mr. Browning to be carried on under the strictest secrecy, and which made any possibility of gaining his consent to her marriage utterly out of the question. For a year after her plighting of troth to Browning, Elizabeth Barrett and her poet-lover lived in ever-increasing intimacy of thought and communication, biding the day when it should seem the will of Heaven that they openly cast in their lots together. During this year of waiting she wrote the matchless sonnets which are, not forgetting Shakespeare's, nor Michael Angelo's, nor Dante Gabriel Rossetti's, nor any others, as transcendently pure and

## STORIES OF AUTHORS' LOVES

splendid expression of romantic love as ever was penned. She never intended that they should meet other eyes than his. Indeed, she was never very certain she could show them even to him. She wrote them because she had to, because both her art and her love were so dear to her that she could not keep them apart; the most transfiguring experience of her life had to voice itself through the medium most sacred to her and most perfectly obedient to her command. During this year, when she remembered the sonnet of a year ago, "Past and Future," she wrote that other :

"Beloved, my Beloved, when I think  
That thou wast in the world a year ago,  
What time I sat alone here in the snow  
And saw no footprint, heard the silence sink  
No moment at thy voice, but, link by link,  
Went counting all my chains as if that so  
They never could fall off at any blow  
Struck by thy possible hand,—why, thus I drink

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Of life's great cup of wonder ! Wonderful,  
Never to feel thee thrill the day or night  
With personal act or speech,—nor even cull  
Some prescience of thee with the blossoms white  
Thou sawest growing ! Atheists are as dull,  
Who cannot guess God's presence out of sight."

Saturday, September 12, 1846, the members of her family being absent at a picnic at Richmond, Elizabeth Barrett, accompanied by her maid, Wilson, took a cab and was driven to Marylebone Church, where, between the hours of 10.45 and 11.15 A.M. she was married to Robert Browning in the presence of his cousin, who acted as witness. Then the lovers separated, and the guilty, tottering bride of forty years, sick with fear of the wrath to come, went to her home. It was their ninety-first meeting, according to Browning's carefully kept record, that hurried morning ceremony in the quiet church. After it was over, they did not see each other again for a week, during which time they exchanged no

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less than eighteen letters and notes; and then they stole away to Italy, she escaping from the house while her family were at dinner. They were never separated again for more than a few hours. In the fifteen years of their wedded life he ate but one meal away from her. Her father never forgave her, never saw her again, never opened any of her letters to him. But neither severed family ties, nor frail health, nor "height, nor depth, nor any other creature" was able to mar the bliss of their perfect union.

For a wedding-gift she gave him, some few months after their marriage, the *Sonnets from the Portuguese*,—so called when published to cover their personal nature,—surely the most magnificent wedding-gift ever offered to bridegroom. Nothing equal to them has ever been written out of a woman's heart on fire with love. And for love's gifts to her, he laid at her feet, through

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the fifteen years of their life together, just such poems as she had expressed a hope that he might write "for a trial on the popular heart." In the years that he lived with her Browning wrote nearly all of the great, throbbing poems by which he is endeared to humanity. His tremendous dramas of psychic subtleties belong for the most part to earlier and later periods. But the shorter poems by which he is best known and most passionately loved were written, nearly all, under the spell of her constant companionship. His dedication to her of his *Men and Women* is one of the most magnificent poems in the language, or in the world. In it he reminds her that Raphael, who painted Madonnas for the world, wrote sonnets for his lady, and Dante, who wrote poems for the world, tried to paint an angel which should please his Beatrice—so, all men, he reminds her, would fain do something absolutely unique for the

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woman who is all and in all. But for himself, he says, he cannot :

“I shall never, in the years remaining,  
Paint you pictures, no, nor carve you statues,  
Make you music that should all-express me ;  
So it seems : I stand on my attainment.  
This of verse alone, one life allows me ;  
Verse and nothing else have I to give you.  
Other heights in other lives, God willing :  
All the gifts from all the heights, your own  
Love !”

But even with his one talent a man may do divinely once, for love, what other times he does but half so well for art or self.

“He who blows through bronze may breathe  
through silver,

\* \* \* \* \*

He who writes may write for once as I do.”

For her he could write as he could not for the world, and so he wrote for her, and the world might like or leave him—so he pleased her, he felt his crown was

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won. And it was his reward of Love that the world loved him best, got greatest good from him, when he wrote with no eye on it, but only on the woman who knew the passionate greatness of his heart and was determined to make him express it for humanity.

Under the tender power of his love her genius flared into its most angelic expression, and even her health was better than ever before, especially after maternity came to add the last drop to her brimming cup of ecstasy.

And as the golden years slipped by,

“To an age so blest that, by its side,  
Youth seems the waste instead,”

and these two souls grew more and more closely knit, their joy in each other grew more and more supreme. And by-and-by, on a certain heavenly evening in June, 1861, when they were alone together, the thin veil of flesh dropped from the spirit, and she, lying in his

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arms, laid her head on his breast and said, of the New Life, "It is beautiful," and was of it forevermore.

He lived here nearly thirty years after her, but though he missed her actual presence sorely, he lived with her in spirit as only he himself could express it in his apostrophe to her in *The Ring and the Book* :

"O lyric Love, half angel and half bird,  
And all a wonder and wild desire,—  
Boldest of hearts that even braved the sun,  
Took sanctuary within the holier blue,  
And sang a kindred soul out to his face,—  
Yet human at the red-ripe of the heart—  
When the first summons from the darkling earth  
Reached thee amid thy chambers, blanched  
    their blue,  
And bared them of the glory—to drop down,  
To toil for man, to suffer or to die,—  
This is the same voice: can thy soul know  
    change?  
Hail then, and harken from the realms of help!  
Never may I commence my song, my due  
To God who best taught song by gift of thee,

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Except with bent head and beseeching hand—  
That still, despite the distance and the dark,  
What was, again may be ; some interchange  
Of grace, some splendor once thy very thought,  
Some benediction, anciently thy smile :  
—Never conclude, but raising hand and head  
Thither where eyes, that cannot reach, yet  
    yearn  
For all hope, all sustainment, all reward,  
Their utmost up and on,—so blessing back  
In those thy realms of help, that heaven, thy  
    home  
Some whiteness which, I judge, thy face makes  
    proud,  
Some wanness where, I think, thy foot may  
    fall !”

And in this spirit he waited and worked  
until the time should come for his complete reunion with her. In this spirit he wrote, of Death and the Beyond, his great poem “Prospice” :

“Fear death? to feel the fog in my throat,  
    The mist in my face,  
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote  
    I am nearing the place,

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The power of the night, the press of the storm,  
The post of the foe ;  
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible  
form,  
Yet the strong man must go :  
For the journey is done and the summit attained,  
And the barriers fall,  
Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be  
gained,  
The reward of it all.  
I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,  
The best and the last !  
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and  
forebore,  
And bade me creep past,  
No ! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my  
peers,  
The heroes of old,  
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's  
arrears  
Of pain, darkness and cold.  
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,  
The black minute's at end,  
And the element's rage, the fiend-voices that  
rave,  
Shall dwindle, shall blend,

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Shall change, shall become first a peace out of  
pain,  
Then a light, then thy breast,  
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee  
again,  
And with God be the rest!"

He said once to Mr. William Sharp :

"Death! Death! It is this harping on death I despise so much ; this idle and often cowardly as well as ignorant harping. Why should we not change like everything else? Death is life. . . . Without death, which is our crape-like, churchyardy word for change, for growth, there could be no prolongation of that which we call life. For myself, I deny death as an end of anything. Never say of me that I am dead."

On the 12th of December, 1889, Browning's last volume of poems, *Asolando*, was published in London. On that day the great poet lay dying in Venice. As the day waned a telegram came from the publishers in London telling how great was the demand for the new book. "How gratifying," said

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the poet, smiling. And as he smiled the great bell of St. Mark's tolled ten o'clock, and while it tolled out the departing day the smile deepened on the face of the poet, and he passed from this life to another where that lady lives of whom his soul was enamored. And there was realized for him that joy that he wished when he wrote to her, after seven years of their blissful union upon earth, these lines, looking towards their anticipated union in Heaven, which is the *real* union of which marriage on earth is but a symbol :

“Think, when our one soul understands  
The great Word which makes all things new,  
When earth breaks up and heaven expands,  
How will the change strike me and you  
In the house not made with hands ?

“Oh, I must feel your brain prompt mine,  
Your heart anticipate my heart,  
You must be just before, in fine,  
See, and make me see, for your part,  
New depths of the divine !”

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Yes, love is unto each of us accord-  
to our capacity for the divine. Well  
might Browning say to her, as they felt  
their love bearing them ever aloft to  
higher and higher planes, until at last  
only Heaven itself could comprehend it :

“ Who could have expected this  
    When we two drew together first  
Just for the obvious human bliss,  
    To satisfy life's daily thirst  
With a thing men seldom miss ? ”

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## THE LOVE-LIFE OF NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

“As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,  
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves  
the storm,  
Though round its breast the rolling clouds  
are spread,  
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.”

ONLY Goldsmith's very familiar figure of description is at all adequate to suggest the man Hawthorne, the rugged splendor of his character, the altitude, high above all surrounding him, at which he held his magnificent, proud head, the thick-gathered storms of distress that unceasingly beat about his breast, and the eternal sunshine that he wore like a god's nimbus by the crowning grace of a woman's

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love. Hawthorne habitually kept him self withdrawn from his fellows ; every anecdote, every tradition connected with him, from his study in the tree to his high tower accessible only by a ladder which he drew up after him to cut off the world below, is full of his evasiveness, and if he had not had a love-story the most idyllic conceivable and yet the most sweetly human, he would have been one of the most unapproachable, least understandable of men after his death, even as he was in life. But, thanks be to a woman, an exceedingly lovely woman, the god-like Apollo of quaint, Puritan New England has been, not lifted from his Olympian height (nay, anything but that !), but so tenderly described for us by her whom his love made immortal with himself, that he stands no more aloof from us as one to whose understanding we dare not reach, but, high as the highest, he has become to us one whose transfiguration does not

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ward us off, but lures us on towards the standard he set of what love may be.

Nathaniel Hawthorne was thirty-two in 1836. He was living in Herbert Street, Salem, with his mother and sisters, in a tall, ugly frame tenement, at which pilgrims by the thousand gaze reverently every year, pitying the beauty-loving soul that for years endured so mean habitation.

Hawthorne's father, a sea captain, died when Nathaniel was only four years old, and the bereavement was so crushing a blow to Mrs. Hawthorne that she practically never rallied from it, but kept her room in solitude nearly all the rest of her life—or for more than forty years of widowhood. The family was poor and proud, and the obloquy of the "witch Judge," who was their ancestor, and whom condemned Rebecca Nurse had cursed to generations unborn, weighed heavily on them; they fancied it set them apart, in the estimation of their

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townsfolk, as reminders of a period which Salem is only too anxious to forget.

Nathaniel, the only son, had been out of college for more than ten years, but gave little promise, as yet, of being more than a dreamer, an idler, a proud solitary, who would not debase his dreams by under-stating them, yet who could find no favor for his best visions. He was writing, more or less, all the time, sometimes under his own name, but oftener under a pen-name; but so little difference did it make to the world then, that when Miss Elizabeth Peabody, of Charter Street, Salem, summoned courage to go to Herbert Street and inquire for the author, of whose faint fame she had heard, she asked for Miss Hawthorne, because she felt sure there was no brother in the family.

Now, the Peabodys represented the most charming element in Salem society. They were a family of exquisite souls, and they attracted to themselves the

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choicest, rarest friendships of their day and their vicinity. The comfortably ample gray house, hard by the little Charter Street burying-ground where Hawthorne's accursed ancestor lies buried, was the rallying point for much that was best in Salem life, and thither came many visitors whose fame was just beginning to be noised abroad, though it hardly promised to be so world-wide, so deathless as in many instances it did eventually become.

It was a gracious courtesy, then, though quite without flavor or feeling of condescension on the part of Elizabeth Peabody, to present herself, unasked, at the inhospitable Herbert Street door to seek out the young writer resident there.

Miss Louisa Hawthorne came in answer to Miss Peabody's request, and the caller broke forth into eloquent praises of "your sister's genius."

"My brother, you mean," said Miss

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Louisa. And that was the first intimation the Peabodys had that in their near neighborhood their lived a man named Nathaniel Hawthorne.

One can imagine Miss Louisa repeating the scene for her brother at the supper-table, to which their mother and older sister never came, and, perhaps, going later to the mother's room, where she ate always in heart-stricken solitude, to tell the story of Nathaniel's discovery—as a genius and as a person!

And, doubtless, when Elizabeth Peabody returned to the charming home circle on Charter Street she enjoyed the surprise of her family over her announcement that the member of the Hawthorne family who had been writing the admirable things was a brother—perhaps only occasionally incarnate, Elizabeth might have been tempted to add, so dearly did that family love a suggestion of the spiritually unusual.

Less wholesome-minded folk than the

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Peabodys—less gentle to “make allowances” and overlook apparent slights—might have thought the Hawthornes unappreciative of Miss Elizabeth’s call and discovery, for some months passed and there was no further intercourse between Herbert and Charter Streets.

But early in 1837 Hawthorne, aided by his college friend, Horatio Bridge, published *Twice-Told Tales* and a prettily bound copy was sent to Miss Peabody, who hastened to reply, and there ensued a correspondence in which she enlisted the favor of the new author for the *Democratic Review*, then about to be started ; and, having made a safe beginning on this basis, she followed up her slight advantage by asking Mr. Hawthorne and his two sisters to spend an evening at Charter Street.

To her astonishment, they all came. Miss Peabody was prepared to receive a bashful youth, but when she opened the door and confronted the noble-look-

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ing man of splendid presence, "handsomer than Lord Byron," as she said, her astonishment knew no bounds.

Miss Elizabeth entertained her guests with looking at pictures and simple conversation. She went upstairs once and tried to coax her sister Sophia to come down; but Sophia, who was a great invalid, refused. Perhaps because he found it so easy to "get on with" Miss Peabody, Hawthorne was emboldened to call again soon. This time the invalid came down-stairs, in her simple white wrapper, and sat on the sofa.

"My sister, Sophia," said Miss Elizabeth, who, describing the scene afterwards, remarked that as Hawthorne rose to acknowledge the introduction he looked at Sophia intently. "He did not guess how intently. As we went on talking she would frequently interpose a remark in her low, sweet voice. Every time she did so he would look at her again, with the same piercing, indrawing gaze.

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I was struck with it, and thought, 'What if he should fall in love with her!' And the thought troubled me; for she had often told me that nothing would ever tempt her to marry and inflict on a husband the care of an invalid."

If the frail, lovely Sophia strongly impressed Hawthorne at first sight, no less did the splendid, luminous "Apollo," as she afterwards called him, impress her. She told her children, many years afterwards, that from the very beginning Hawthorne had for her a magnetic attraction so strong that she instinctively drew back from it, in self-defence, as 'twere. But there was no drawing back possible; the great, the irretrievable thing was done. They both made every test of it, for years, to see if it were true, if it *could* be "downed," but it would not.

Hawthorne was wretchedly poor and terribly despondent over his prospects; and Sophia Peabody had been an invalid



SOPHIA HAWTHORNE

From the portrait in the possession of Julian Hawthorne, Esq.



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from childhood, with no reasonable hope of recovery, as she was then well out of her girlhood.

About the time that Elizabeth Peabody presented herself at Herbert Street, Hawthorne had received from his dear friend Horatio Bridge, a letter which suggests only too well to what kind of an outburst it must have been a reply, and makes plain for us the condition of mind into which love entered.

"DEAR HATH," the letter ran, "I have just received your last, and do not like its tone at all. There is a kind of desperate coolness about it that seems dangerous. I fear you are too good a subject for suicide, and that some day you will end your mortal woes on your own responsibility."

Hawthorne had complained that at best he did not see his way clear to make more than three hundred dollars a year by his writings, and the cheery, hopeful Bridge returns in substance,—

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“What of it? you can, with economy, live upon that, though it will be a tight squeeze. You have no family dependent upon you, and why should you borrow trouble? . . . It seems to me that you never look at the bright side with any hope or confidence. It is not the philosophy to make one happy.”

Mr. Bridge stood guarantor for the publication of *Twice-Told Tales* out of which, in the first eight years of its existence in print, Hawthorne realized the sum of about one hundred dollars. But it brought him a princely appreciation from Longfellow, his college-mate, in the *North American Review*, and in many quarters helped to establish his fame.

Still, it must have been with a heavy heart that he awoke to the realization that he loved frail Sophia Peabody. Poverty was bad enough before, but when it promised to shut him out from what suddenly loomed up before him as the crowning blessing of life, it was indeed a hard sentence.

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It must have been in one of his sad moods, when only renunciation seemed required of him, that he wrote to Elizabeth Peabody, in Boston :

“Sophia is a flower to be worn in no man’s bosom, but lent from heaven to show the possibilities of the human soul.”

He little dreamed, then, to what glorious degree she had been “lent by heaven” to show to him and to all the world the possibilities of his soul !

So things went on for about two years ; then Hawthorne, casting all “prudence” to the winds, declared his love for Sophia, and was rewarded with a return declaration and a kind of engagement, contingent upon her recovery from her twenty years’ illness.

“If God intends us to marry,” she said to him, “He will let me be cured ; if not, it will be a sign that it is not best.”

This was a faint hope to hold to, for a

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cure would be little less than a miracle. But Hawthorne clung to it, and so did Sophia ; and as if by the very might and purity of their love they began to get such control of circumstances as made their union possible—and from their union it was as if all things became possible to them.

The same year of the engagement Hawthorne was appointed weigher and gauger in the Boston Custom-House, under George Bancroft, collector of the port,—a dreary, dirty work, indeed, but it meant money, and money meant a home for Sophia and himself.

And from the grimy surroundings of unloading coal schooners he wrote to Sophia, in Charter Street, some of the most exquisite love-letters imaginable, and received in return, from the love-lit, safe-guarded home in Salem, such delicate outpourings of an exalted love as the post has carried to few men.

Thence he wrote :

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"If you cannot grow plump and rosy, and tough and vigorous without being changed into another nature, then do I think, for this short life you had better remain just what you are. Yes: but you will be the same to me, because we have met in eternity, and there our intimacy was formed. . . . I never till now had a friend who could give me repose. . . . But peace overflows from your heart into mine."

And in another letter he says:

"How strange it is, tender and fragile little Sophia, that your protection should have become absolutely necessary to such a great, rough, burly, broad-shouldered personage as I! I need your support as much as you need mine."

And again:

"Worthy of you I am not, but you will make me so, for there will be time or eternity enough for your blessed influence to work upon me."

In another letter of this period he writes:

"I had walked those many years in darkness, and might have walked through life, with only a

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dreamy notion that there was any light in the universe, if you had not kissed my eyelids and given me to see."

In the spring of 1841 Hawthorne's custom-house employment came to an end with the change in administration, and he thought he saw an opportunity to make a home for himself and Sophia by joining the (now famous) Brook Farm community. So he invested his little capital of one thousand dollars in the communal undertaking, but left at the end of the first year, poorer by all his thousand dollars, but richer by the knowledge that communal life was not the life for him, and by the experience that eventually fructified in his great novel *The Blithedale Romance*.

Before he left Brook Farm the Peabodys had removed to Boston to live, and Sophia had been more than once the short distance to Brook Farm to see her stalwart, princely-looking lover in plough-

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man's dress and about ploughman's occupation.

She was as glad as he, in spite of the sore financial loss, when he decided that the Brook Farm life was not the life for him, in spite of its luminous associations, including Margaret Fuller, George William Curtis, Charles A. Dana, and occasionally Emerson.

On leaving, however, Hawthorne was so much the richer by a better sense of his abilities—an effect of rare friendship. It was Emerson who said that our friends are those who make us do what we can ; and the friendships of that circle of which Emerson was the rare, sweet centre and light, added to such love as Sophia gave him, constantly raising him to the level of her matchless ideals, enabled Hawthorne to face the prospect of a literary life with some hopefulness, perhaps augmented to a certain Divine *faith* by the fact that Sophia was vastly improved in health,—the miraculous sign she had

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asked of heaven in approval of her marriage.

In Concord, where Emerson and Thoreau and Alcott and Elizabeth Hoar and Channing and other rare spirits lived, there was then vacant a house known as "The Old Manse," a charming old place, all its traditions brave and full of inspiration. It was isolated, even for Concord, and ideally situated in good grounds, near the river,—a place in ten thousand for a honeymoon. So, brave of heart and full of hope and the courage of love, Hawthorne rented it and set about the few simple preparations of getting ready for his bride. They were going to take the future into their hands, so to speak, and trust supremely in their love and their labor to bless their union.

The rapture with which they approached the consummation of their hopes is hinted at (words can do only so much!) in a letter Hawthorne wrote

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to Sophia on June 9, 1842, just a month before the day set for their wedding.

“We can already measure the interval by days and hours,” he says. “What happiness! And what awe is intermingled with it! No fear, no doubt, but a holy awe as when an immortal spirit is drawing near to the gates of heaven.”

Now if this were a novel it would probably end with that rapt ecstasy of foretaste,—as if that were the climax, and to add to it were to be guilty of that gross mistake of art, an anti-climax. But the real story, as it is written in their letters and told by their children and friends, only begins here, really. Their courtship days were sweet, but the superlative sweetness and beauty, the radiant, ecstatic happiness and blessedness of the Hawthorne love-story practically has no culminating point on earth.

The glimpses of their Eden preserved to us in Mrs. Hawthorne's letters and in the recollections of their children are

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the most beautiful page of romance realized that one could find anywhere in the annals of human happiness. They were poor, as the world counts poverty, but never king sat on throne of gold and ivory whose joy one covets as one covets for himself such joy as came to the Hawthornes in their sunset walks, their evenings under the lamp, their Paradise in a homely New England frame cottage.

They had been married a little less than six months when Sophia wrote this brief but beautiful suggestion of her idyllic life to an old-time friend of hers in Salem :

“ . . . That magician up-stairs is very potent ! In the afternoon and evening I sit in the Study with him. It is the pleasantest niche in our temple. We watch the sun, together, descending in purple and gold, in every variety of magnificence, over the river. Lately, we go on the river, which is now frozen ; my lord to skate, and I to run and slide, during the dolphin-death of day. I consider my husband a rare

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sight, gliding over the icy stream. For, wrapped in his cloak, he looks very graceful; perpetually darting from me in long, sweeping curves, and returning again—again to shoot away. . . . Sometimes, in the splendor of the dying light, we seem sporting upon transparent gold, so prismatic becomes the ice; and the snow takes opaline hues, from the gems that float above as clouds. . . . After the first snow-storm, before it was so deep, we walked in the woods, very beautiful in winter, and found slides in Sleepy Hollow, where we became children, and enjoyed ourselves as of old,—only more, a great deal. Sometimes it is before breakfast that Mr. Hawthorne goes to skate upon the meadow. Yesterday, before he went out, he said it was very cloudy and gloomy, and he thought it would storm. In half an hour, oh, wonder! what a scene! Instead of black sky, the rising sun, not yet above the hill, had changed the firmament into a vast rose! On every side, east, west, north, and south, every point blushed roses. I ran to the Study, and the meadow sea also was a rose, the reflection of that above. And there was my husband, careering about, glorified by the light. Such is Paradise.

To the same friend Sophia wrote, in April following her marriage:

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"We have passed the winter delightfully, reading to each other, and lately studying German. I know a little, just enough to empower me to hold the rod, and be somewhat impertinent, and I have entire pre-eminence in the way of pronunciation. But ever and anon I am made quite humble by being helped out of thick forests by my knight, instead of guiding him. So we teach each other in the most charming manner, and I call it the royal road to knowledge, finally discovered by us."

As the joy of this union deepened with every day, Sophia, writing a letter of condolence to a friend, expressed the opinion that "we talk a great deal about the reality of heaven and the shadowiness of earth, but no one acts as if it were the truth." "God alone," she adds, "knows whether I could act my belief in the greatest of all possible earthly separations. But before I loved as I do now heaven was dim to me in comparison. I cannot conceive of a *separation* for one moment from my transfigured soul in him who is trans-

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fused with my being. I am in heaven now. Oh, let me not doubt, if for a little while a shadow should wrap his material form from my sight."

In one of her letters to her mother this radiant wife gives an unforgettable picture of one of their evenings. After describing the simple treasures of the Study, she says :

"In the afternoon, when the sun fills the room and lights up the pictures, it is beautiful. Yet still more so, perhaps, in the evening, when the astral [her name for their hanging lamp] enacts the sun, and pours shine upon all objects, and shows, beneath, the noblest head in Christendom, in the ancient chair with its sculptured back ; and whenever I look up, two stars beneath a brow of serene white radiate love and sympathy upon me. Can you think of a happier life, with its rich intellectual feasts? That downy bloom of happiness, which unfaithful and ignoble poets have persisted in declaring always vanished at the touch and wear of life, is delicate and fresh as ever, and must remain so, if we remain unprofane. The sacredness, the loftiness, the ethereal delicacy of

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such a soul as my husband's will keep heaven about us."

"Heaven about us!" That best describes the story of their whole married life. "Apollo," as she loved to call him, hewed wood and drew water, made fires, hoed and planted in his garden; even boiled potatoes and washed dishes in his Paradise. His "ownest Phœbe," as he loved to call her, sewed homely woolen blouses for him, and "had the happiness," as she wrote, "of toasting his bread." "Imagine him," she begged her mother, "with that magnificent head bent over a cooking-stove, and those star-eyes watching the pot boil! In consequence, there never were such good potatoes before." Delicious, too, is her confession of housewifely consternation when she discovered that Apollo "had put the ivory handles of the knives into the water, knowing no better, and left the silver to be washed last instead of first."

## LOVE-LIFE OF NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

So they worked and played, loved and labored, these glorious twain, love lending a heavenly splendor to their commonest pursuit, as the sunrises and sunsets they so dearly loved lent their splendors of rose and purple and gold to the prosaic flats of their inundated meadow and the far-lying fields of the Concord farmers. Hawthorne's literary struggles were severe, and returns came but meagrely to the Old Manse, close by the rude bridge that arched the flood where, long ago, the embattled farmers stood. They even had to do without service of the rudest sort for seasons, when Apollo left his writings to enact the duties of cook and maid for the household whose queen sat enthroned, looking on, with the baby in her arms. It was a great change for the proud, solitary Nathaniel Hawthorne, from his moody, musing walks about sombre Salem to manifold domestic cares in the rambling old

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manse of Concord ; it was an odd situation for a literary genius the most commanding his country has ever known,—boiling potatoes and washing dishes and building fires and helping with the care of babies, writing in “between chores” as opportunity offered. And it was no less a change for frail, cherished Sophia Peabody, coming from a couch in Charter Street, where she had lain for years in invalid state and received the homage of a brilliant coterie of friends, to the isolation of this country life where they saw few persons of any sort, and where the rudest tasks of a country housewife would have been hers had not her husband intervened by taking most of them on his own magnificent shoulders. She who had always been nursed with such exquisite devotion now gave her days and nights to the care of her babies and to battling with problems of the most straitened circumstances. Yet how infinitely happy they were !

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"I do not need," Sophia wrote her Apollo, during a brief absence from him on a visit to her mother, "to stand apart from daily life to see how fair and blest our lot is. Every mother is not like me, because not every mother has such a father for her children; so that my cares are forever light."

And to her mother, on returning to her own home, Sophia wrote :

"You are quite right; I am so happy that I require nothing more. No art nor beauty can excel my daily life, with such a husband and such children, the exponents of all art and beauty. I really have not even the temptation to go out of my house to find anything better. Not that I enjoy less any specimen of earthly or heavenly grace when I meet it elsewhere; but I have so much in perpetual presence that I am not *hungry* for such things."

They had moved to Salem, meanwhile, and were living in that tall, quiet house on Mall Street, where, later, *The Scarlet Letter* was written. Hawthorne was working, as everybody

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knows, in the custom-house, and was, as everybody also knows, suddenly turned out of his job, "headlong," as Sophia put it, by some political machination. His attempt to depend on letters for a livelihood had meant starvation for them all, when the little family was augmented by the arrival of the blessed babies, and he had bravely put by his pen and gone into the disagreeable business of customs ; he hated it, but it meant a decent livelihood, and he made no complaint. When it was lost to him, there was nothing ahead of them but urgent necessity,—no promise of anything ; but Sophia was full of outward cheer, however full she might have been of inward misgiving. She wrote her mother :

" It has come in the way of an inevitable Providence to us (whatever knavery some people may have to answer for who have been the agents in the removal), and I never receive inevitable Providences with resignation merely, but with *joy*, as certainly, undoubtedly, the best possible events

## LOVE-LIFE OF NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

that can happen for me ; and immediately I begin to weave the apparent straw into gold, like the maiden in the fairy tale."

Which is just what she did, for she said to Hawthorne, "Never mind ; now you can write your book." And he did. And there, in the upper rooms of the house in Mall Street, while the summer days went by, Hester Prynne and little Pearl, Chillingsworth and Dimmesdale began to issue out of the shadows and be transferred to the written page with a vividness that makes them among the most unforgettable creatures in our literature. Then began a new era for the Hawthornes, and Sophia's letters grow full of exultation in the general recognition of her Apollo's genius. She writes her mother, in 1851, from Lenox, in the Berkshires, where the Hawthornes lived for a year and a half succeeding their removal from Salem :

"Do not wait an hour to procure the last two numbers of *The Literary World*, and read a new

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criticism on Mr. Hawthorne. At last some one speaks the right word of him. I have not before heard it. I have been wearied and annoyed hitherto with hearing him compared to Washington Irving and other American writers, and put generally *second*. At last some one dares to say what in my secret mind I have often thought,—that he is only to be mentioned with the Swan of Avon; the great heart and the grand intellect combined."

And, later,—

"Browning says he is the finest genius that has appeared in English literature for many years."

Fame, however,—and in the fourteen years following Nathaniel Hawthorne had an abundance of it,—made little difference in his life. Always he avoided all the world so much as he could, and always Sophia was not only his chief but his sole inspirer, confidante, and adviser. Arm in arm with her he paced under the larches at Wayside, while the moon silvered the brown path under their feet and unfolded his schemes to her quick

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sympathy ; and in Rome, in Liverpool, in whatever excursions they were called to make into the great world outside, it was ever the same,—'round about Hawthorne, as he advanced in life, great persons, great scenes clustered, but the shy nature of the Salem solitary never altered, men and things never grew familiar to him, save as subjects for his scrutinizing study, and only a little, frail, lovely woman, with a soul than which never woman had lovelier, abode within the holy of holies of his heart and kept bright the lamp burning therein. For twenty-two years they lived together, then she was called upon to show what faith she had "in the greatest of all possible earthly separations." And out of the night of her widowhood, out of the midnight of her pain, she uttered this cry of Love Triumphant :

"I have no more to ask but that I may be able to comfort all who mourn as I am comforted. If

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I could bear all sorrow, I would be glad, because God has turned for me the silver lining, and for me the darkest cloud has broken into ten thousand singing birds, as I saw in my dream that I told you. So in another dream, long ago, God showed me a gold thread passing through each mesh of a black pall that seemed to shut out the sun. I can comprehend all now. Before I did not doubt. Now God says in soft thunders, 'Even so.' "

Ah ! but that was Love indeed, which not only transfigured this life that is, but prefigured, as in a new Apocalypse, that Life that is to come !

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## THE STORY OF A POET'S ROMANCE LONGFELLOW AND "HYPERION"

THERE has been a good deal said about authors putting the best of themselves into their books and about the impertinence of any desire on the part of the reading public to know more of the author's thought and purpose than he tells in the printed page ; but like all sweeping statements, there is as much untruth as truth in this, and it is frequently the case that the unwritten history of even a very good book is far more interesting, far richer in human elements, than the book itself, and once in a while when "the story of a story" comes to light, it serves the purpose of stimulating and preserving interest in some literary performance that

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otherwise would long since have passed into the limbo of forgotten books.

For instance, in the college term of 1838-39, a young Harvard professor applied himself with great labor to the writing of a sort of romance in which, strung on the thread of a delicate love-story, he set forth many a parti-colored bit of legend, description, and philosophizing about Heidelberg and the Rhine region. The hero of the tale was one Paul Flemming, a young student and man of letters, who, at the outset of the story, has just passed through an almost crushing bereavement.

“The friend of his youth was dead. The bough had broken ‘under the burden of the unripe fruit.’ And when, after a season, he looked up again from the blindness of his sorrow, all things seemed unreal. . . . His household gods were broken. He had no home. His sympathies cried aloud from his desolate soul; and there came no answer from the busy, turbulent world around him. He did not willingly give

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way to grief. He struggled to be cheerful,—to be strong. But he could no longer look into the familiar faces of his friends. He could no longer live alone where he had lived with her. . . . He had already passed many months in lonely wandering, and was now pursuing his way along the Rhine, to the south of Germany."

As he goes his melancholy way the reader, following him, is treated to descriptions of that way so vivid and so accurate that 'tis said no better guide to that region has ever been written; and, mingled with these descriptions of scenes, are many legends and bits of curious folk-lore, varied by conversations on many topics, mainly bookish. Presently Paul Flemming, on his southward journey, comes to Switzerland, to Interlachen, which he apostrophizes, rhapsodically, saying, "The evening sun was setting when I first beheld thee. The sun of life will set ere I forget thee!" Part of this rapture may be laid at the door of Interlachen's beauty, and part

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to the fact that there Paul Flemming met Mary Ashburton, the heroine of the romance. Paul was talking to an English acquaintance in the parlor of the inn, when

“presently a female figure, clothed in black, entered the room and sat down by the window. She rather listened to the conversation than joined in it; but the few words she said were spoken in a voice so musical and full of soul that it moved the soul of Flemming like a whisper from heaven. Oh, how wonderful is the human voice! It is indeed the organ of the soul! . . . Flemming would fain have sat and listened for hours to the sound of that unknown voice. He felt sure, in his secret heart, that the being from whom it came was beautiful. His imagination filled up the faint outline which the eye beheld in the fading twilight, and the figure stood already in his mind like Raphael’s beautiful Madonna in the Dresden gallery. He never was more mistaken in his life. The voice belonged to a beautiful being, it is true; but her beauty was different from that of any Madonna which Raphael ever painted, as he would have seen had he waited till the lamps were lighted.”

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He did not wait to match imagination with reality, however, but was summoned by the landlord to inspect his room. The English acquaintance accompanied him, and of him Flemming inquired, "Who was that young lady, with the soft voice?" and was told her name was Mary Ashburton. The next morning, when he had seen her "in the fair light of a summer morning," Flemming found Mary Ashburton even more beautiful than he had dreamed. She was, the romancer says,

"in her twentieth summer. Like the fair maiden Amoret, she was sitting in the lap of womanhood. They did her wrong who said she was not beautiful; and yet

'She was not fair,  
Nor beautiful;—those words express her not.  
But oh, her looks had something excellent,  
That wants a name!'

Her face had a wonderful fascination in it, it was such a calm, quiet face, with the light of the rising soul shining so peacefully through it. At

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times it wore an expression of seriousness,—of sorrow even; and then seemed to make the very air bright with what the Italian poets so beautifully call the lightning of the angelic smile. And oh, those eyes,—those deep, unutterable eyes, with ‘down-falling eyelids, full of dreams and slumber,’ and within them a cold, living light, as in mountain-lakes at evening, or in the river of Paradise, for ever gliding,

‘ With a brown, brown current,  
Under the shade perpetual, that never  
Ray of the sun lets in, nor of the moon.’

I dislike an eye that twinkles like a star. Those only are beautiful which, like the planets, have a steady, lambent light,—are luminous, but not sparkling. Such eyes the Greek poets give to the Immortals.

“The lady’s figure was striking. Every step, every attitude was graceful, and yet lofty, as if inspired by the soul within. Angels in the old poetic philosophy have such forms; it was the soul itself imprinted on the air. And what a soul was hers! A temple dedicated to Heaven, and, like the Pantheon at Rome, lighted only from above. And earthly passions in the form of gods were no longer there, but the sweet and

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thoughtful faces of Christ, and the Virgin Mary, and the saints. Thus there was not one discordant thing in her ; but a perfect harmony of figure, and face, and soul,—in a word, of the whole being. And he who had a soul to comprehend hers must of necessity love her, and having once loved her, could love no other woman for evermore."

Paul Flemming had "a soul to comprehend hers," and he loved this lovely Mary Ashburton exceedingly, but without return. The romance describes, very poetically, the unfolding of his love, along with descriptions of the scenes he and she visited in company while their ways coincided, there among the lakes and Alps of Switzerland. The romancer states,—

"The livelong day he was with her either in reality or in day-dreams hardly less real."

And, touching the young man's still-fresh grief, observes,—

"One by one the objects of our affection depart from us. But our affections remain, and like

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vines stretch forth their broken, wounded tendrils for support. The bleeding heart needs a balm to heal it; and there is none but the love of its kind,—none but the affection of a human heart! Thus the wounded, broken affections of Flemming began to lift themselves from the dust and cling around this new object. Days and weeks passed, and, like the Student Crisostomo, he ceased to love because he began to adore. And with this adoration mingled the prayer that in that hour when the world is still, and the voices that praise are mute, and reflection cometh like twilight, and the maiden in her day-dreams counted the number of her friends, some voice in the sacred silence of her thoughts might whisper his name."

The day that Flemming gathered courage to breathe his hope, they were sitting "on the green, flowery meadow under the ruins of Burg Unspunnen. She was sketching the ruins" and lamenting that there was no romantic tradition connected with them.

"I will tell you one, if you wish," said Flemming, and proceeded to construct for her a fable of a student, Hierony-

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mus, who dwelt in one of the towers of this now ruined castle, living peacefully with his books until between him and the illumined page there came disturbing visions of a lovely Lady Hermione ; and when this poor Hieronymus sought for peace and learned that never could he have it again save by forgetting his beloved lady, he elected the torments of loving her unrequitedly, thenceforth, rather than the student quiet of old with his books. And concluding his story Paul Flemming said,—

“And the name was no longer Hermione, but was changed to Mary ; and the Student Hieronymus—is lying at your feet, O gentle Lady !

“ ‘I did hear you talk  
Far above singing ; and after you were gone,  
I grew acquainted with my heart, and searched  
What stirred it so ! Alas ! I found it love.’ ”

But Mary had no answering love to give him, and told him so, gently but with dignity. That night Flemming left Inter-

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lachen for Innsbruck, and a week later, in Salzburg, he was stricken with a raging fever. He was taking the loss of Mary Ashburton very hard, but a better impulse came to him presently in a little roadside chapel into which he wandered, one day, very restless and ill at ease. It was a cool, quiet little chapel, and as he knelt there, weeping, he looked up and read on a marble tablet in the wall opposite, this inscription :

“Look not mournfully into the Past. It comes not back again. Wisely improve the Present. It is thine. Go forth to meet the shadowy Future without fear and with a manly heart.”

And in that moment Paul Flemming felt the stone of despair rolled away from the door of his heart. The love of his gentle lady still remained with him, but not unto despair, and he went forth “to meet the shadowy Future without fear.”

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With this the romance ended,—in the printed book ! The story of the author was this :

He had been graduated from Bowdoin College in 1825, when only a few months over eighteen years of age. He was an excellent student, an exemplary young man, and when he left his college halls it was with the invitation of the trustees to return to them again in the capacity of professor of modern languages. He accepted the offer and went abroad to prepare himself. He remained abroad, travelling most of the time, until the opening of the fall term in 1829, when he entered upon the duties of a professorship at the age of twenty-two, and soon thereafter he launched into the literary activities towards which, as a calling, he had always aspired. In September, 1831, the young professor was married to one of the girl friends of his youth, a very beautiful and talented Miss Mary Pot-

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ter, of Portland, where the youthful bridegroom had been born and brought up. The young couple set up their household gods in a poetic, elm-shaded old house in Brunswick, the college town, and there lived an ideally happy life for nearly four years, at the end of which time there came to the ambitious Bowdoin professor an invitation to fill a similar chair in the very much larger and more important field of Harvard College. Again he went abroad for further study, and this time the young wife went with him. They set sail in April, 1835, and before leaving the professor had arranged with the Harpers for the publication of the travel sketches written in description of his first journeyings in Europe.

All went delightfully on this second visit to the Old World until, reaching Amsterdam on October 1, the young wife fell ill and was able to proceed only after some time. As they went slowly on

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their way, accommodating their stages to her ability, she again fell ill, this time at Rotterdam, where on November 29 she died, "broken under the burden of the unripe fruit." The blow to the bereft husband was terrible, but he was there, in a strange land, for a purpose, and whatever his grief, honor demanded that that purpose be not slighted. So to his studies he addressed himself with what heart he could, and in June, after nearly seven months of close application to the mastery of languages, he set out on a sight-seeing tour of Switzerland and, he hoped, Italy. It happened, however, that he could not get proper passports into Italy, and thereby hung fate for him. It was at Thun, soon after he turned back, disappointed, from the borders of Italy, that he met, on their way to Interlachen, Mr. Nathan Appleton, of Boston, and his family. The young professor's disappointment at not finding his compatriots going his way was keen.

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But he had, he says, only a few moments' conversation with Mr. Appleton, and was "off for Berne," whence he soon returned, however, and retraced his steps to Interlachen, where he found the Appletons, and where, the hotels being full, he got himself quartered in one of the "cells" of an old convent, just as he described Paul Flemming being quartered at this same Interlachen, in the romance *Hyperion*. There he stayed for some time, the Appletons staying also. On August 17 the professor was obliged to leave his friends and start for Heidelberg, which he did that same night. His journal and letters about this time are very fragmentary and uncommunicative of the details we long to know. We cannot have any knowledge of what passed between him and Miss Frances Elizabeth Appleton, although, however attracted towards her he may have been, it is extremely unlikely that, with his young wife only eight months in

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the grave, he could have progressed so far as actual love-making with another woman. We do know, however, that at that time, when his heart was very sore and heavy within him, he found the society of this charming young girl of nineteen deliciously comforting, and that the impression of tender, womanly sympathy she made on him then was never effaced.

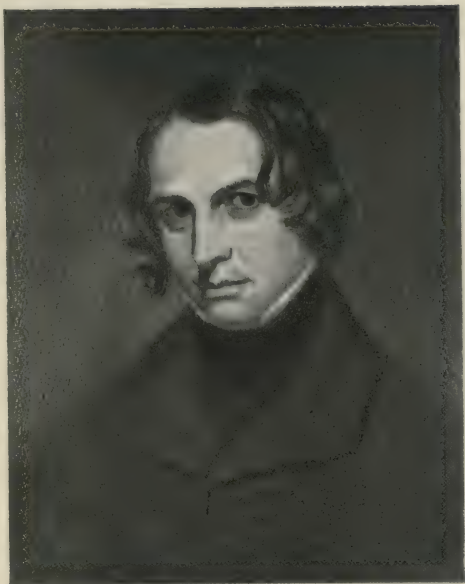
In December of that year he established himself in Cambridge and entered upon his duties as professor. In the year or two that followed he was very much occupied with his teaching and with the preparation of lectures, but he found time to write a few poems, among them one called "A Psalm of Life," of which, for some time after he had finished it, he had so diffident an opinion that he showed it to no one. The first mention his journal makes of the romance that he intended to write is under date of September 13, 1838, when he

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says, "Looked over my notes and papers for *Hyperion*."

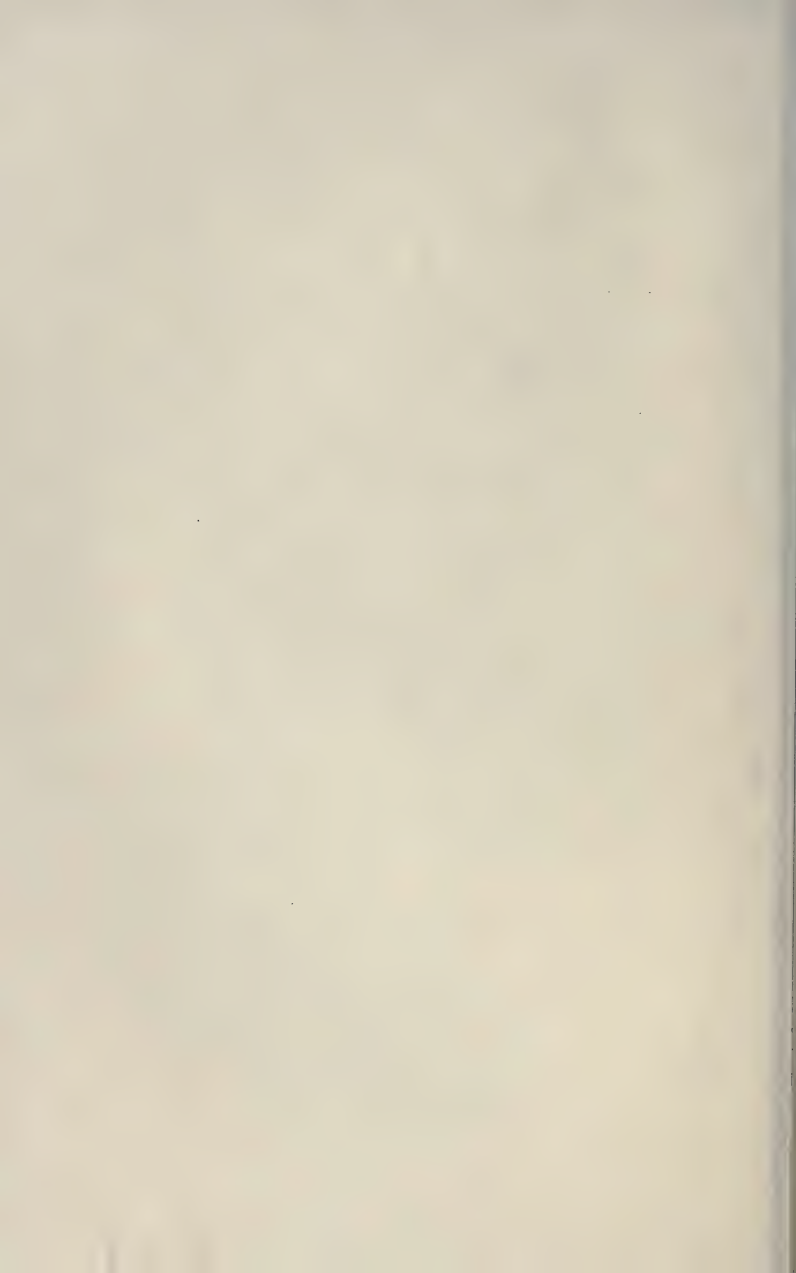
From that on, till under date of June 8, 1839, he says: "Put into the printers' hands the first chapter of *Hyperion*," his entries and letters contain many references to the romance; indeed, *after* that date they do, his letters particularly evidencing an author's keen anxiety to know what his family and friends thought of his book. But through all these references to the book we look in vain for the name of the girl for whom the book was written, whose heart it was compounded to move.

We would give a good deal to know with what emotions Miss Appleton read the romance whereof she was the unmistakable heroine, and the author the unmistakable hero; but we know that it moved her heart at last, or at least that it did not harden it against her lover, for in 1843 she became his wife, and an unwritten chapter, but an idylli-



HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW IN 1840

From the portrait by C. G. Thompson



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cally lovely one, was added to the history of "Paul Flemming," or, as he is better known, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

"Mary Ashburton" was "in her twentieth summer" when Paul Flemming first saw her in the inn at Interlachen, but if, at that time, the exquisite descriptions in *Hyperion* fitted her, at the time of her marriage, in her twenty-seventh summer, they scarcely did her justice. The lovely girl had become a still more lovely woman, of stately presence, cultivated intellect, and beautiful graciousness of manner; it may well be doubted if ever poet had wife more ideally suited to him. There probably never lived a kinder, gentler, sweeter man than this same "white Mr. Longfellow," as Howells calls him in that exquisite sketch which better conveys the lovely spirit of the poet than all his biographies do in combination. And it would be difficult to conceive a

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finer type of gentlewoman, in the loveliest senses of that word, than she who blessed the poet's life so abundantly for eighteen years almost to a day.

Longfellow had nearly ruined his eyesight from too close application to books in the twilight, and at the time of his marriage they were in a very bad way indeed. Immediately on their marriage, therefore, the poet and his bride, instead of starting at once upon a journey, repaired to the suite of rooms which Longfellow had occupied for nearly seven years in historic old Craigie House, a noble Colonial mansion in Cambridge which had been Washington's headquarters during a part of the Revolutionary period, and which had many other notable and splendid traditions besides. Longfellow was greatly attached to this grand old house with its spacious, beautifully set-out grounds and its "Old World" air of age and solidity, and it was a princely wedding-gift for

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Mr. Appleton to present it to the newly wedded pair, and not it only, but the land across the street, reaching to the river, so that the noble outlook might never be encroached upon.

After a fortnight in Craigie House, the Longfellows set out upon a round of pleasant journeyings, first to Portland, to pay their respects to the poet's people, then to Nahant, where the Appletons spent their summers, and subsequently to Pittsfield, in the heart of the Berkshires, where some of the bride's relatives lived in the "old-fashioned country-seat," under its poplars, the old clock upon the stairs ticking "Never—Forever" in a song the poet has since made immortal.

During those first months of their new life Mrs. Longfellow was amanuensis to her husband, and thus she brought, from the beginning, not only the helpfulness of her lovely, womanly spirit, but the actual helpfulness of her eyes and hands to the poet's aid. By

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and by, as his eyesight came back to him, and her time came to be absorbed by wee Longfellows, she was less in his library, but never less in his heart, over which, as over their lovely home, she reigned a gracious chatelaine. Eight years after their marriage he recorded in his journal :

“Feb. 20th. With F. [Frances] at a splendid ladies' dinner-party at Prescott's [the historian] ; between twenty and thirty guests ; I never saw so many handsome women at one table. . . . My own wife I name last, but think of as first among them all.”

On July 9, 1861, Mrs. Longfellow was sitting in her husband's library with her two little girls, engaged in sealing up some small packages of their curls which she had just cut off. She wore a very thin, diaphanous dress in the extremely voluminous fashion of the period, and this in some manner caught fire, and the poor lady was so severely burned

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and so terribly frightened that she died the next morning. Her husband was badly burned in trying to save her.

They laid her away in lovely Mount Auburn on the anniversary of her wedding-day, in the forty-fifth year of her age, a wreath of orange blossoms on her beautiful, stately head. Longfellow was too fine a spirit to be permanently embittered by any sorrow, but all who knew him testify that through the more than twenty years he survived her, he was never the same man he had been before his wife's tragic death.

Gentler, tenderer, more considerate than before he was, if that were possible, but something of zest had gone out of his life that entered into it never again, and whatever had been merry in his sweet, sunny nature gave place to the most complete compassion ; he was unspeakably tender of every living thing, of people's little struggles as well as of

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their great sorrows, of their least comfort and pleasure as well as of their great liberties and welfare; there seemed to be room in his heart and tension within his patience for every living creature, so that he was literally the great Emancipator's ideal, "with malice toward none, with charity to all." But the last twenty years of his way were lonely years,—graced by myriad lovely friendships, by the adoration of thousands, but hungry in their innermost needs, hungry beyond the power of anything on earth to fill.

In many respects Longfellow led what might have been termed a "charmed life." Of material struggle for bread or for place, he had practically none; his life began and ended in flowery circumstances; honor, preferments, fame, money, adoration, came his way almost without effort on his part, it would seem, save that he was always a scrupulously conscientious worker and liver, so much

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so that all the glory of his life may well seem no more than the outcome of his purity, gentleness, and integrity,

In grace of temperament, in beauty of person, in kindliness of worldly circumstance, Longfellow stood in the eyes of the world as one at whose christening *all* the good and generous fairies had been present, each with a supremely pleasant gift, but it is more than probable that, if he had been given his choice, it would have been to give up all these things and keep the woman whose close companionship would have sweetened all loss and soothed all sorrow. But no more than the least of us could he choose his cross. To some one who expressed the hope that he might be enabled to bear that cross with patience, he replied, "*Bear* the cross, yes ; but what if one is stretched upon it?"

And to that sweet soul, George William Curtis, he wrote, at the end of September in that tragic year :

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“Have patience with me if I have not answered your affectionate and touching letter. Even now I cannot answer it; I can only thank you for it. I am too utterly wretched and overwhelmed,—to the eyes of others, outwardly, calm; but inwardly bleeding to death.”

Eighteen years after his terrible bereavement, Longfellow was looking one day over an illustrated book of Western scenery, when his attention was arrested by a picture of that mysterious mountain, “upon whose lonely, lofty breast,” as the poet’s brother and biographer, Samuel Longfellow, describes it, “the snow lies in long furrows that make a rude, but wonderfully clear image of a vast cross.” He looked from the picture to his chamber wall, where hung a portrait of her he had loved so well, and as he looked, his thoughts framed themselves into some verses, which he put away in his portfolio, where they were found after his death.

Forty years before he had “begun,

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but could not finish," "Footsteps of Angels," in which he enshrines his memory of

"the being beauteous  
Who unto my youth was given,  
More than all things else to love me,  
And is now a saint in heaven."

That was the tender sorrow of his very young manhood. But life was fresh then, and very potent was the zest of all its mysteries. Later, when death robbed him, he had tasted a large part of all that life can offer to a man, and had come to know that the one thing that satisfies was the thing he had to sacrifice. Eighteen years of sorrow, the more poignant because almost never referred to, and he sat him down, in the lonely night watches, and, looking up at the beautiful face above him, wrote,—

"In the long, sleepless watches of the night,  
A gentle face—the face of one long dead—

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Looks at me from the wall, where round its  
head

The night-lamp casts a halo of pale light.  
Here in this room she died ; and soul more white  
Never through martyrdom of fire was led  
To its repose ; nor can in books be read  
The legend of a soul more benedict.

“There is a mountain in the distant West  
That, sun-defying, in its deep ravines  
Displays a cross of snow upon its side.  
Such is the cross I wear upon my breast  
These eighteen years, through all the changing  
scenes  
And seasons, changeless since the day she  
died.”

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## THE PITIFUL PASSION OF POOR

JOHN KEATS

**I**N a close, grimy lecture-room of a London hospital, one day in 1816, a group of students knitted their brows over the problems in surgery presented them by their instructor. Not improbably there was a demonstration in anatomy, some poor derelict of London life furnishing the object-lesson, the scene recalling Rembrandt's great picture, save that in place of the beruffed and bewhiskered Hollanders about the poor, pale corse, we must imagine rosy-faced English youths, zealous in the pursuit of a promising profession. London smoke fogged the atmosphere without, and London traffic resounded in a dull roar ; within, everything was suggestive of human suffering

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at its pitifullest, and the voice of the learned doctor droned on and on, dropping polysyllabled technicalities, as if the Thing discussed had never housed a palpitating human heart, in love with joy and beauty, and desirous of eternal good. Suddenly, through the dusty window, a sunbeam filtered and shone on a beautiful lad only half intent on the anatomy of the poor derelict ; it lit up with glory his head of thickly-clustering golden-brown curls, played about his low Greek brow, and brought to the most wonderfully luminous eyes that ever bespoke inspiration in a human head, and to the exquisitely sensitive mouth, one of those looks of rapt ecstasy which became, in time, forever memorable to any one beholding them. Perhaps the professor noted only that the sunbeam gave him a better light for his demonstrating ; but the boy said, "There came a sunbeam into the room, and with it a whole troop of creatures

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floating in the ray ; and I was off with them to Oberon and fairy-land."

This thing, or something kin to it, had happened before ; the fairies called and called the lad until, from making infrequent excursions with them, he joined himself to them utterly, abandoning the hospital entirely and all prospects of a livelihood by surgery, and delivering himself up to the fairy folk, to be theirs whenever and whithersoever they might call, and to ask no further sustenance than what they might provide.

It was a mad thing to do, for the boy was a hostler's son who owed to a frugal, livery-keeping grandfather the opportunity of a professional education which might fit him for a better place in life than his forbears had enjoyed. The little legacy left by his mother's father was already well drawn upon for schooling, and the orphan lad had scant prospect ahead save what he might earn in the sweat of his brow. But there were

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few to care how he might fare. His two brothers and one sister were younger than he, and certainly not more worldly-wise, and besides them there was only their guardian, a tea-dealer, whose strong disapproval was not enough to restrain John Keats, since John was now turned twenty-one, and past his full majority. So John, with no particular expectations, but with sublime faith in Oberon and the fairies, abandoned himself to that unscheduled profession, the pursuit of beauty, and to that precarious profession, the expression of it in verse.

Now, Wordsworth, Scott, Coleridge, Southey, Shelley, Byron, Campbell, and Moore were all in their heyday just then, and the gates of criticism were guarded by such men as Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, Lockhart, and "Fusty Christopher." Lamb was in his zenith, and so was the vigorous Rogers, the Dr. Johnson of his day, and the inspired opium-eater, De Quincey. London had never

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in all her history been the literary centre for so glittering a galaxy of writing men. But the lad whom the fairies called did not hesitate to enter himself in their lists ; perhaps he hoped, vaguely, to meet and mingle with the elect some day ; perhaps he didn't care, so only he might be where the sun shone, and the flowers bloomed, and the birds sang, and the bees hummed. His friend Haydon, the painter, wrote of him, long afterwards, when the name of Keats had become as magic a name as any in his time, or in all time, "He was in his glory in the fields. The humming of a bee, the sight of a flower, the glitter of the sun, seemed to make his nature tremble ; then his eyes flashed, his cheek glowed, and his mouth quivered."

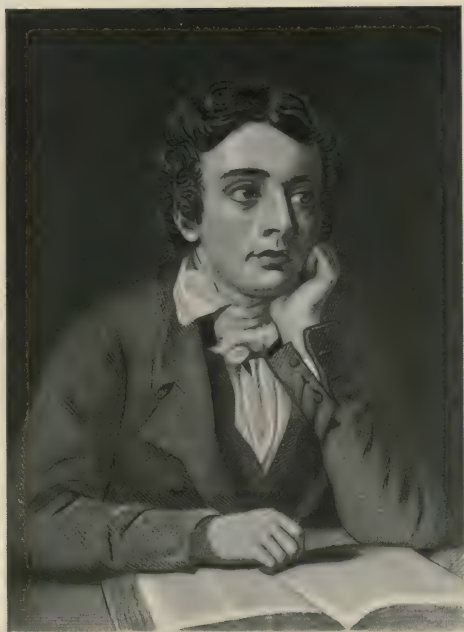
But Nature, in thus dowering him with an intense love of her, had given him also what she has not always given

"to him who, in a love of nature, holds  
Communion with her visible forms,"

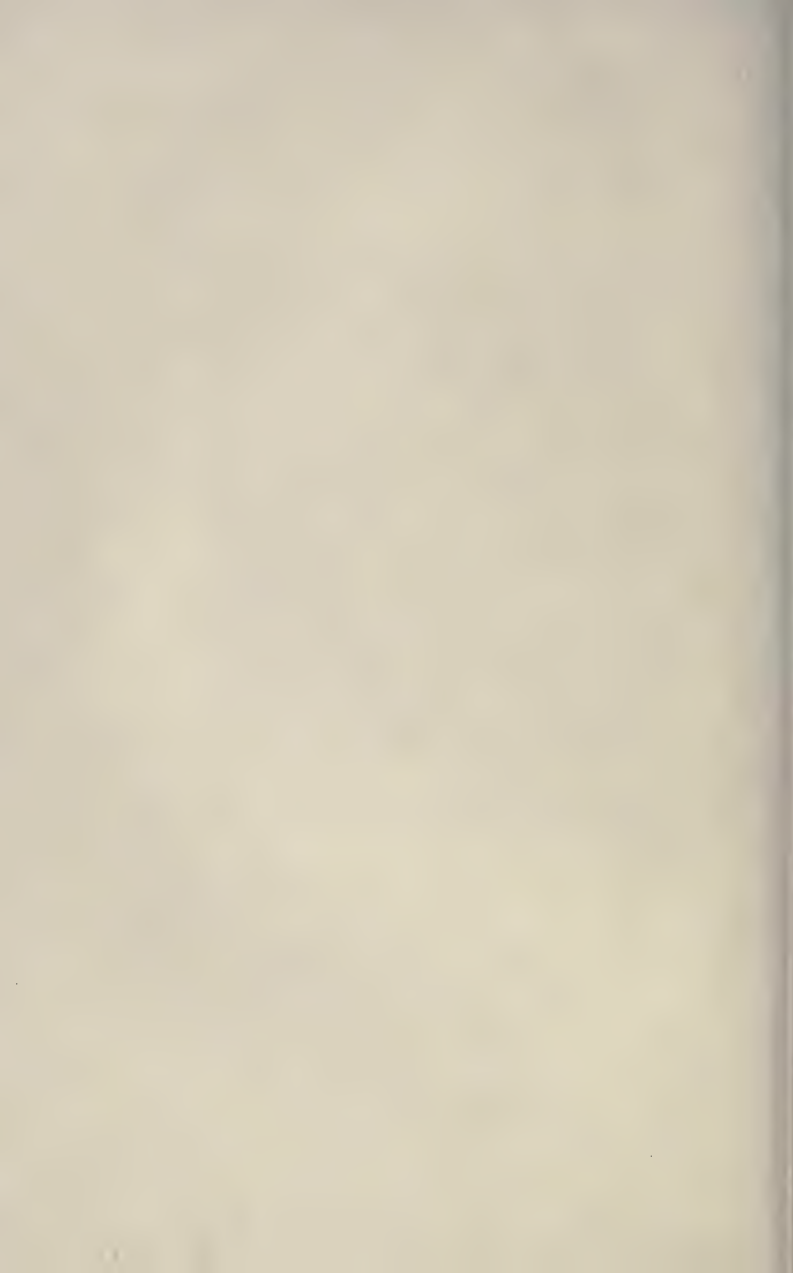
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for love of nature has been known to make men solitary ; it has been known to lead them, like Thoreau, to declare "there is no man whose society will not spoil my afternoon." Keats, on the contrary, was, if eminently a nature-lover, pre-eminently a lover of human nature ; he could turn from the most celebrated glories of landscape to a row of grinning country boys and girls, and say, "Scenery is fine, but human nature is finer," and add, in appreciation of the boys and girls, "I never felt so near the glory of patriotism, the glory of making, by any means, a country happier. This is what I like better than scenery."

Now, this passion for human nature is a contagious thing, and the man who creates the contagion usually finds it reacting on himself. Keats loved his fellows, and they loved him ; and with all his tendency to melancholia and morbidness, he had, too, the Celtic gayety that goes therewith in some compo-



JOHN KEATS  
From the portrait by Joseph Severn



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sitions, and by the testimony of all who knew him he was as divinely endowed for friendships as for the writing of poetry. Consequently, when the obscure youth let himself adrift in London, with his more than vague notions of earning a livelihood by literature, the first success that we find him scoring was a notable success in the making of good friends.

He had gone to school to the father of Charles Cowden Clarke, and had formed a friendship with the gifted son which lasted through Keats's life. In 1816 Clarke made Keats acquainted with Leigh Hunt, who was then living at Hampstead, and some of Keats's essays in verse, including his now almost tritely famous sonnet, *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer*, were shown to Hunt, whose enthusiastic praise of the young poet and eager interest in him brought Keats very frequently to the Hampstead home, which was the gathering place of

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many kindred spirits, including Shelley, whom Keats met at Hunt's early in the spring of 1817, about the time that Keats's first volume of poems was published.

The little volume was not a success, financially or with the critics ; but Keats, quite undismayed, went on with his "Endymion," and for the better devotion to it betook himself to the Isle of Wight, where, however, he was ill at ease, and whence he soon removed by stages to London again, taking up his residence at Hampstead, where his brothers joined him, and where he worked steadily the summer through on his first long poem. The situation at Hampstead was pleasing for many reasons. There he had quiet and natural country beauty, yet convenient proximity to London, and there he had the companionship of some very choice friends. Moreover, the freshness of the air was a paramount consideration, for

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a shadow was hanging over the little family group in the frail health of the youngest brother Tom, like the others heir to their consumptive mother's malady, but destined to be the first to succumb to it. And there, on historic Hampstead heath, working away on his immortal poem, and enjoying to the full such relaxation as the society of his brothers and a few friends allowed, the circles of Keats's life began to widen, little by little, until they were comprehended by one which seemed thereafter to mark the boundary for him in every direction.

His social instincts, reaching out on all sides, presently brought him into acquaintance with two other Hampstead dwellers, literary strugglers both, who lived side by side in a couple of semi-detached houses at the foot of the heath. Dilke, the elder of the two, had built one of these houses at the time of his marriage, and Brown, a bachelor, had

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soon afterwards built the other to keep bachelor hall in. In June, 1818, George Keats married and emigrated to America, and, after seeing the bride and groom off at Liverpool, John Keats and Brown started on a walking tour in the north of England and through Scotland, visiting the Lake Country of Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge, and the countries of Scott and Burns. Keats returned alone in August, partly because his own health was not good, partly because the condition of his brother Tom began to be alarming. Returning to his Hampstead lodgings, tired and ill in mind and body, Keats was going, although he was worlds away from suspecting it, into a fierce unrest which was to wax more and more piteous until it wore him out in a wild delirium of pain, some three years and a half later.

Keats saw, very soon after reaching his brother's side, that the worst was to

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be apprehended; and in December it came to pass, after a painful lingering, leaving John alone, very much alone, so that Charles Brown, his jovial, big-hearted friend, picked up the poor, frail, tired little poet bodily, as 'twere, and carried him home to live with him.

Now, when Brown had been preparing to go on his long walking tour with Keats, the June previous, he had let his house, furnished, for the summer, to a strange family, a Mrs. Brawne, a widow, and her three children, of whom the eldest was a daughter just grown into young ladyhood. During the summer the Brawnes quite naturally became "neighborly" with the Dilkes next door, and when Brown came back in the autumn and the Brawnes moved to a house in a street near by, the intimacy with the Dilkes continued; and at the Dilkes' house, in that sad fall when he was nursing his dying brother, Keats met Miss Fanny Brawne.

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Up to this time Keats's attitude towards women had been that of a poet who idealized them in the abstract, rather than that of a man who loved them in the concrete, much less one woman as the concretion of her sex. In his inability to find coincidence between the women of his imagination and the women he met, Keats was rather a disparager than an admirer of the women he came in contact with.

He wrote to Bailey from Scotland:

"I am certain I have not a right feeling towards women. At this moment I am striving to be just to them, but I cannot. Is it because they fall so far beneath my boyish imagination? When I was a schoolboy I thought a fair woman a pure goddess; my mind was a soft nest in which some one of them slept, though she knew it not. I have no right to expect more than their reality. I thought them ethereal, above men. I find them perhaps equal—great by comparison is very small. . . . Is it not extraordinary? When among men I have no evil thoughts, no malice, no spleen; I feel free to speak or to be silent; I

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can listen, and from every one I can learn ; my hands are in my pockets, I am free from all suspicion, and comfortable. When I am among women I have evil thoughts, malice, spleen ; I cannot speak, or be silent ; I am full of suspicions, and therefore listen to nothing ; I am in a hurry to be gone. . . . I must absolutely get over this—but how ?”

And to George and Georgiana Keats in America (of the latter of whom John Keats was exceedingly fond in a frank, wholesome, comrade-like way in which he seems never to have esteemed any other woman), he wrote, in excuse of his disinclination to marry :

“The roaring of the wind is my wife, and the stars through my window-panes are my children ; the mighty abstract idea of Beauty in all things I have stifles the more divided and minute domestic happiness. An amiable wife and sweet children I contemplate as part of that Beauty, but I must have a thousand of those beautiful particles to fill up my heart. I feel more and more every day, as my imagination strengthens, that I do not live in this world alone, but in a thousand worlds. No

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sooner am I alone than shapes of epic greatness are stationed around me, and serve my spirit the office which is equivalent to a king's body-guard ; 'then Tragedy with scepter'd pall comes sweeping by.' According to my state of mind I am with Achilles shouting in the trenches, or with Theocritus in the vales of Sicily ; or throw my whole being into Troilus, and, repeating those lines, 'I wander like a lost soul upon the Stygian bank, staying for waftage,' I melt into the air with a voluptuousness so delicate that I am content to be alone. These things, combined with the opinion I have formed of the generality of women, who appear to me as children to whom I would rather give a sugar-plum than my time, form a barrier against matrimony that I rejoice in."

It was in October, 1818, just before his brother's death, that Keats met Fanny Brawne, and in a letter of that period to his brother and sister-in-law in America, Keats wrote :

"Shall I give you Miss Brawne? She is about my height—with a fine style of countenance of the lengthened sort—she wants sentiment in every feature—she manages to make her hair look well



FANNY BRAWNE

From the silhouette, which is the only existing portrait



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—her nostrils are fine—though a little painful—her mouth is bad and good—her profile is better than her full-face which indeed is not full but pale and thin without showing any bone. Her shape is very graceful and so are her movements—her arms are good, her hands bad-ish—her feet tolerable—she is not seventeen [this is a mistake ; she was nearly nineteen]—but she is ignorant—monstrous in her behavior, flying out in all directions, calling people such names—that I was forced lately to make use of the term *Minx*—this is I think not from any innate vice but from a penchant she has for acting foolishly. I am however tired of such style and shall decline any more of it."

It is well known that Keats's first impressions of Miss Brawne were not good ; but we have his own authority for the statement that within a very short time she had completely enslaved his fancy. One of his biographers suggests that we must take the above description as the resentment of a man heretofore free from the pangs of love, who found himself suddenly in thrall. Beyond this

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description, and a silhouette portrait of the young lady, we have no further account of her than what we may deduce from the letters and poems Keats addressed to her. She seems to have been of irreproachable parentage, far above the stableman's son in social position, and a rather "spoiled" young person ; but history has made no note of her in anywise save that she was loved by John Keats, and so immortalized. No slightest fragment of anything written by her in reply to his burning love epistles has been preserved ; in the annals of love and literature Fanny Brawne has no individual existence ; she is the girl Keats loved, that is all, and we have no other vision of her than as he saw her, save as we, saner and shrewder than the poor love-sick lad, read between the lines of his passionate appeals and draw conclusions of our own about Fanny Brawne, and why his friends, one and all, frowned on his infatuation for

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her. If the worshipper reflects the character of that he worships, there is not a great deal to be said in favor of little Fanny Brawne. Taken in comparison with his other familiar letters, Keats's letters to her offer some significant contrasts. His letters to his family and near friends are overflowing with the love of fun which was so characteristic of him ; they are a treasury of anecdote and whimsical comment, rich in some of the quaintest expressions in epistolary literature ; the letters to Miss Brawne show not a trace of humor—scarcely one of *good* humor—in the ordinary use of the term. To others he wrote freely, in elaborate detail, of what he was doing, where he had been, whom he had seen, and wherewithal he was occupied, with snatches of poetic “studies” or carefully annotated bits of finished work. To her he seldom said more of his affairs than that he was busy or not busy, or that his post-office address was so-and-so, and the

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mails came twice or thrice a week. For all the distinguishing marks of time or place, Keats's letters to Fanny Brawne might well have been written B.C. instead of A.D., might well have passed between primeval man and woman, or come from the pen of a love-sick swain in the Babylonian days. They have but one chord, major and minor of it, and it is Thee and Me, now in a kind of panting ecstasy, now in screaming, jealous pain. His earliest poem to her is one of jealous misery, written during his first separation from her, in January, 1819 :

“Ah ! dearest love, sweet home of all my fears,  
And hopes, and joys, and panting miseries,—  
To-night, if I may guess, thy beauty wears  
    A smile of such delight,  
    As brilliant and as bright,  
As when with ravished, aching, vassal eyes,  
    Lost in soft amaze,  
    I gaze, I gaze !

\*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*

“Why, this, you'll say, my Fanny ! is not true :  
    Put your soft hand upon your snowy side,

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Where the heart beats: confess 'tis nothing  
new—

Must not a woman be  
A feather on the sea,  
Swayed to and fro by every wind and tide?  
Of as uncertain speed  
As blow-ball from the mead?

“I know it—and to know it is despair  
To one who loves you as I love, sweet Fanny!  
Whose heart goes fluttering for you everywhere,  
Nor, when away you roam,  
Dare keep its wretched home,  
Love, love alone, his pains severe and many:  
Then, loveliest! keep me free,  
From torturing jealousy.”

And in the first letter that he wrote  
her, or at least in the first that has been  
preserved, he says:

“Ask yourself, my love, whether you are not  
very cruel to have so entrammelled me, so de-  
stroyed my freedom.”

This is the note of Keats's passion  
throughout. He fought it from the

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first; he died fighting it, as men die fighting a frightful malady which is eating out their vitals. The foundation of the infatuation seems to have been, at least on his side, purely physical. In a letter to her, written from the Isle of Wight, whither he had gone in the summer of 1819 to work on his "Hyperion," he writes :

"Why may I not speak of your Beauty, since without that I could never have lov'd you? I cannot conceive any beginning of such love as I have for you but Beauty. There may be a sort of love for which, without the least sneer at it, I have the highest respect and can admire it in others: but it has not the richness, the bloom, the full form, the enchantment of love after my own heart."

The quality of passion so engendered was inevitably of a low order and bound to carry with it horrible penalties of jealousy, since the enthralling thing in Miss Brawne was not her soul, which only her elect lover might know, nor her

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mind, opening up its shy, sweet maiden treasures for the delectation of the chosen few alone, but her superficial charms, as freely displayed to the passer-by as to her betrothed ; any man in a ball-room might see in Fanny Brawne what Keats saw in her, and Keats knew this, and was terribly tormented thereby. He knew, too, that Miss Fanny was not the lady to guard her charms jealously for her lover, but that she made the most of them, always, to bring her admiration. She seems to have been demurely pleased at his tremendous passion for her, and to have reciprocated as much as in her lay ; but the capacity for being absorbed was doubtless not hers, and knowing this gave Keats great wretchedness. In one of his last letters to her he wrote :

“ Well may you exclaim, how selfish, how cruel not to let me enjoy my youth ! to wish me to be unhappy. You must be so if you love me. Upon my soul I can be contented with nothing else. If

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you would really what is called enjoy yourself at a party—if you can smile in people's faces and wish them to admire you *now*—you never have nor ever will love me. I see *life* in nothing but the certainty of your love—convince me of it my sweetest. If I am not somehow convinced I shall die of agony. If we love we must not live as other men and women do—I cannot brook the wolfsbane of fashion and foppery and tattle—you must be mine to die upon the rack if I want you.”

And during the same absence from her he wrote again :

“I have heard you say that it was not unpleasant to wait a few years—you have amusements—your mind is away—you have not brooded over one idea as I have, and how should you? You are to me an object intensely desirable—the air I breathe in a room empty of you is unhealthy. I am not the same to you—no—you can wait—you have a thousand activities—you can be happy without me. Any party, anything to fill up the day has been enough. How have you pass'd this month? Who have you smiled with? All this may seem savage in me. You do not feel as I do—you do not know what it is to love

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—one day you may—your time is not come. Ask yourself how many unhappy hours Keats has caused you in loneliness. For myself I have been a martyr the whole time, and for this reason I speak; the confession is forc'd from me by the torture. I appeal to you by the blood of that Christ you believe in: Do not write to me if you have done anything this month which it would have pained me to have seen. You may have altered—if you have not—if you still behave in dancing rooms and other societies as I have seen you—I do not want to live—if you have done so I wish this coming night may be my last. I cannot live without you, and not only you but *chaste you; virtuous you*. The sun rises and sets, the day passes, and you follow the bent of your inclination to a certain extent—you have no conception of the quantity of miserable feeling that passes through me in a day.—Be serious! Love is not a plaything, and again do not write unless you can do it with a crystal conscience.”

After this manner poor Keats fretted and fumed through three years and a half, until he wore himself out, body and spirit, most miserably. The disapproval meted out by all his friends to his in-

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fatuation for Miss Brawne served only to embitter him against the friends and to put a seal of silence on his lips and his letters regarding her. To her he admits :

“ My friends laugh at you ! I know some of them—when I know them all I shall never think of them again as friends or even acquaintances. My friends have behaved well to me in every instance but one, and there they have become tattlers, and inquisitors into my conduct : spying upon a secret I would rather die than share it with any body's confidence. For this I cannot wish them well, I care not to see any of them again. If I am the Theme, I will not be the friend of idle gossips. Good gods what a shame it is our Loves should be so put into the microscope of a coterie. . . . People are revengeful—do not mind them—do nothing but love me—if I knew that for certain life and health will in such event be a heaven, and death itself will be less painful. . . . Your name never passes my lips—do not let mine pass yours. . . . My dearest love, I am afraid to see you. Will my arm be ever round you again, and if so shall I be obliged to leave you again ? My sweet Love ! I am happy whilst I believe

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your first letter. Let me be but certain that you are mine heart and soul, and I could die more happily than I could otherwise live."

The truth of the matter was that Keats had no prospects entitling him to contemplate marrying. He was more than poor, he was dependent on the charity of his friends, and very soon after he knew Miss Brawne it became only too evident that he was marked for his young brother's fate, and would die a lingering death, and fill, at no distant day, a consumptive's grave. Moreover, Keats had no smallest patience with details and responsibilities, and would have writhed under the petty restraints of ordinary married life as on the rack. He was ill-designed to wed, any way he might consider the prospect. But if he had fixed his affections on a different type of woman, things need not, *per se*, have been so bad. What his friends chiefly objected to was not his being in love ; friends must needs be very offi-

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cious to object to a poet being in love ; but his absorption in vain, pretty little Miss Brawne, who seemed to bring him no peace, no help, no benediction of love, but only its torments, wearing on his already feeble health, and delivering his spirits over to a destroying jealousy which threatened to blight his genius as well as his life. One must be slow to blame the poor, pretty little girl for not inspiring a different quality of affection ; one must not think her too unduly coquettish or self-absorbed. Keats was a lad fighting what seemed a forlorn battle against unkind Fate, and he had, too, to pay the penalties of his artistic temperament. There is a nice balance about fate, after all ; things are not so unevenly divided as they oftentimes seem, and to him who, like Keats, is given an hundredfold power to feel beauty and to make others thrill with it after him, there is given also a corresponding sensitiveness to misery. You

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cannot refine gold and at the same time make it resist more ; to be serviceable it must contain a good per cent. of alloy.

Keats, having pitched his passion to a low tune, whether by fate or by his own choice, was obliged to dance thereto until the tune was done. It was not long. His mortal malady was aggravated in some degree by the bitter attacks of the reviewers on his published work, but more by the exasperation entailed in the blasting of his hopes regarding Miss Brawne. She seems to have remained faithful to him in general, if not in particular, and, however much she enjoyed the admiring society of better constituted folk, to have held firmly to her purpose of marrying the poor, pale lad who loved her so. She was all that she could be to him, poor little girl :

“And it wasn’t the blame, and it wasn’t the  
shame,

That burned like a white-hot brand ;

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It was coming to know that she never would  
know,

That she never could understand."

It would be the most extravagant injustice to compare poor little Fanny Brawne to the vampire of Kipling's poem, except in a remote way; but in her own fashion she, no less than the blood-sucking woman of the under-world whom Kipling vituperates, was a drain on the endurance of the man who had pinned his faith to her. He claimed her for his ideal, and enwrapped her in a solitary's pent-up passion, which would have been well enough in its way if he had been content, as many visionaries have been, with the subjective phase of love. But it is not the least wretchedness of physical love that it cannot find anything in itself alone but increased gnawings of desire, and that in the fulfilment of its desire it all too often finds satiety. Keats's passion was no doubt augmented and metamorphosed from a

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healthful affection into a morbid infatuation by the very fact that its happy consummation seemed so hopeless.

Shortly before his final separation from her, when it became imperatively evident that Keats must winter in Italy if he would survive the winter at all, he wrote to Miss Brawne :

“Indeed I should like to give up the matter at once—I should like to die. I am sickened at the brute world which you are smiling with. I hate men, and women more. I see nothing but thorns for the future—wherever I may be next winter, in Italy or nowhere, Brown will be living near you with his indecencies. I see no prospect of any rest. . . . I wish you could infuse a little confidence of human nature into my heart. I cannot muster any—the world is too brutal for me—I am glad there is such a thing as the grave—I am sure I shall never have any rest till I get there.”

He never wrote to her again, except a “Good-bye, Fanny! God bless you,” scrawled at the bottom of a letter he wrote her mother on arriving at Naples

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in October. On the voyage thither he had written to Fanny the famous sonnet which was his last poetic effort :

“Bright star, would I were stedfast as thou art,  
Not in lone splendor hung aloft the night  
And watching, with eternal lids apart,  
Like nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,  
The moving waters at their priestlike task  
Of cold ablution round earth's human shores,  
Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask  
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—  
No—yet still stedfast, still unchangeable,  
Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,  
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,  
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,  
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,  
And so live ever—or else swoon to death.”

To Brown he wrote from Naples :

“I can bear to die—I cannot bear to leave her . . . Oh God ! God ! God ! Everything I have in my trunks that reminds me of her goes through me like a spear. The silk lining she put in my travelling cap scalds my head. My imagination is horribly vivid about her—I see her—I

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hear her . . . Oh, Brown, I have coals of fire in my breast. It surprises me that the human heart is capable of so much misery.”

He had probably by that time abandoned all hope of prolonging his life beyond a very few months at most, and while he was no coward of pain, he fain would have made an end of it all immediately,—the wretchedness of slow dying in poverty, in a foreign land, was so repulsive to his poet's beauty-loving temperament. But his devoted friend Severn, the painter, who accompanied him on his last journey and attended him with loving ministrations to the very dreaded brink, constrained him, by precept and example of sweet, heroic living, to make a good fight to the bitter end. Of those days in Rome Mr. Colvin, Keats's biographer, writes :

“Occasionally there came times of delirium or half-delirium, when the dying man would rave wildly of his miseries and his ruined hopes, till his

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companion was almost exhausted with 'beating about in the tempest of his mind ;' and once and again some fresh remembrance of his love, or the sight of her handwriting in a letter, would pierce him with too intolerable a pang. But generally, after the first few weeks, he lay quiet, with his hand clasped on a white cornelian, one of the little tokens she had given him at starting, while his companion soothed him with reading or music. . . . Of recovery he would not hear, but longed for nothing except the peace of death. . . . 'I feel,' he said, 'the flowers growing over me ;' and it seems to have been gently and without bitterness that he gave the words for his epitaph : 'Here lies one whose name was writ in water.' "

The end came peacefully.

"On the 23 of February," writes Severn, "about four, the approaches of death came on. 'Severn—I—lift me up—I am dying. I shall die easy ; don't be frightened—be firm, and thank God it has come.' "

Not until the end of the October following would Keats have been twenty-six years old, yet the verdict of time has been with Shelley, who wrote :

## PITIFUL PASSION OF POOR JOHN KEATS

“ ‘Here lies One whose name was writ in water.’

But, ere the breath that could erase it blew,  
Death, in remorse for that fell slaughter,  
Death, the immortalizing winter, flew  
Athwart the stream,—and time’s printless  
torrent grew

A scroll of crystal, blazoning the name  
Of Adonais.”

And, in the deathless lyric wherein he  
poured out not only his but the world’s  
lament, Shelley found also Keats’s com-  
pensation :

“He has outsoared the shadow of our night ;

Envy and calumny and hate and pain,  
And that unrest which men miscall delight,  
Can touch him not and torture not again ;

From the contagion of the world’s slow stain

He is secure, and now can never mourn  
A heart grown cold, a head grown gray in vain ;

Nor, when the spirit’s self has ceased to burn,  
With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.”

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## BRAVE-HEARTED THACKERAY

**I**N January, 1894, the daily press announced the death of Mrs. William M. Thackeray, at the age of seventy-five, and her interment at Kensal Green Cemetery in the same grave where her illustrious husband had, just thirty years before, been laid to rest—a worn and world-weary man of fifty-two. So little has been written of Thackeray's marriage, so little, indeed, is known of it, that it was with a shock of utter surprise that the world read this announcement eight years ago.

But for that matter the world knows little enough of brave-hearted Thackeray—so little that there are still those who, in ignorance and bitter injustice, call him a cynic and a snob, not knowing how he prayed that he might never write a word inconsistent with the love of God



WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

From the portrait by Samuel Laurence



or the love of man ; that he might never propagate his own prejudices or pander to those of others ; that he might always speak the truth with his pen, and that he might never be actuated by a love of greed—all this “ for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.” The world knows too little of the temptations he daily endured, for many hard, hard years, to be untrue to the spirit of this prayer—knows too little of the ocean of sorrow that rolled over him before he was thirty, and of the daily struggle that was his, without relief, so that when his giant frame was in its coffin Dickens said it was so shrunken and wasted that it looked like the form of a man of eighty, though he had no illness, but only slipped out of life into eternity while he slept, just tired, after a brave fight.

It is true that he had large meed of success and all that this brings to the heart—but it is equally true that he wrote :

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“Canst thou, O friendly reader, count upon the fidelity of an artless heart or tender or true, and reckon among the blessings which Heaven hath bestowed on thee, the love of faithful women? Purify thine own heart and try to make it worthy of theirs. All the prizes of life are nothing compared to that one. All the rewards of ambition, wealth, pleasure, only vanity and disappointment, grasped at greedily and fought over fiercely, and over and over again found worthless by the weary universe.”

Early in 1836 Major Carmichael Smyth, Thackeray's stepfather, bought a respectable London paper entitled *The Public Ledger*, transformed it under the title of *The Constitutional and Public Ledger* and gave young Thackeray the post of Paris correspondent.

No sooner was the thing projected than the newly appointed correspondent decided to take upon himself the cares and joys of married life. He was twenty-five years old, and his little patrimony had some time since become a thing of memory. He had tried to be an artist, and

## BRAVE-HEARTED THACKERAY

had failed of any encouragement, he had written only a few, furtive things of no promise above the most ordinary, and it might well have been a problem to him how he might expect to maintain a family. But if it was, we do not know it. History is very meagre, after all, in details about the man who, more than almost any other man who ever wrote, inextricably mingled the charm of his personality with that of his art. One may search with utmost diligence for details of his courtship and marriage and find little more than the register book of marriages in the house of the British Ambassador in Paris records. There, in the presence of three witnesses, M. H. Luscombe, Bishop and Chaplain, joined in matrimony William Makepeace Thackeray and Isabella Gethen Creagh Shawe, "of the Parish of Doneraile, in the County of Cork." This was on August 20, 1836.

Thackeray's first Paris letter to *The*

## STORIES OF AUTHORS' LOVES

*Constitutional* was published September 27; on July 1 of the following year the paper, which had been failing from the first, suspended publication, and in the wreck was lost most of the fortune of Major Smyth and what little was left of Thackeray's patrimony. One longs to know what the girl-wife said and did in those dark days; if she refused to be downcast like sweet Sophia Hawthorne and saw, like her, good in apparent evil. One longs for a snatch of correspondence that passed between Thackeray and his Isabella in the few short years that they knew each other, or for some little detail of their life together; but history gives us none. It merely records the facts that Thackeray met Miss Shawe at his grandmother's and that he lost his heart to her when he heard her sing.

After the failure of *The Constitutional* the young Thackerays went to London and stayed with Thackeray's parents in Albion Street, Hyde Park, where, in

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1838, their eldest daughter, now Mrs. Richmond Ritchie, was born. Afterwards they moved to Great Coram Street, where was born another child, who died in infancy. About this time work began to be abundant with Thackeray, and the outlook was quite hopeful when, in May, 1840, a third child came to the young couple, and sweet young Isabella Thackeray was mortally ill. She rallied physically from the clutches of the Destroyer, but not mentally, and at the age of twenty-nine Thackeray was virtually a widower, with two little girls dependent on him, not alone for support, but for all the tenderesses which a mother might have bestowed on them. For twenty-three years he lived under this shadow, bravely, sweetly,—enjoying, as much as a lonely man may, the delights of his constantly increasing fame and the comforts he was able to afford himself and “the girls,” as he so often referred to them. But the world never knew, and

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never will know, what he suffered in loneliness and grief, as triumph after triumph became his, and he heard the world's plaudits and tasted the joy of being almost worshipped by men of his craft—and remembered the poor little woman, shut away from all the interests of those who loved her and waiting, waiting for the long-delayed release that came to her only after the incredible period of fifty-four years of madness.

“I was as happy as the day was long with her,” he said; and one day when Trollope's groom said to him, “I hear you have written a book upon Ireland, and are always making fun of the Irish; you don't like us,” Thackeray's eyes filled with tears as he thought of his wife, and he replied, turning away his head, “God help me! All that I have loved best in the world is Irish.”

Shortly before his death he wrote to a young friend about to marry, “though my marriage was a wreck, as you know,

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I would do it again, for behold ! Love is the crown and completion of all earthly good."

But while he longed so ardently for love and held it so sacred, he never cared for another woman than the Irish sweetheart of his boyhood, though he depended so on womanly ministration that in the early days of his desolation he said, as if apologizing for what his great need might sometime drive him to, "I cannot live without the tenderness of some woman, and expect when I am sixty I shall be marrying a girl of eleven or twelve, innocent, barley-sugar-loving, in a pinafore." If he ever felt the need—the utter, utter weariness of longing for "the touches of her hands," or the refuge of her breast or the comfort of her soothing voice—of some woman's tenderness, he never gave himself up to it, but was faithful to the end to the little Irish sweetheart and wife who was so much worse than dead to him.

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She was the merest slip of a lassie, barely over twenty, when she ceased to know him and to be known of him—a blooming rose of Irish beauty, a tender little thing with all the passionate fervor of a loving Irish temperament, sunny and impulsive and lavishly unselfish. He was only twenty-nine when the cloud settled over her—twenty-nine and big, buoyant, *good* (always *good*, and always urging those who looked to him for guidance to just “*Be good, my dear*”), but quite unillustrious and perhaps not even very promising.

How was it that January morning, only eight short years ago, when the Portals swung wide for Isabella Thackeray, and she was reunited to husband and two children? One loves to believe that all the four-and-fifty years of madness were as naught, as an evil dream that has no power to trouble in the glory of the morning; one loves to believe that it was the radiant Irish rose of his youth that

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came to brave-hearted Thackeray through the shining portals and brought to him for all eternity "the tenderness of a woman," in heaped-up reward for all the patient, faithful goodness of long, lonely years. And she is proud of *The New-comers*, no doubt, and of *The Virginians* and of *Vanity Fair*, and proud of the love of thousands upon thousands for her husband. But most of all she is proud, not that he wrote great books, but that he was *good*; that in spite of many trials he kept his spirit pure and sweet, so that when she came to him again he was not alone, as Lord Tennyson said, "the head of English literature of the Victorian Era," but her own dear laddie still, the true heart of her girlish love, for all eternity.

"It is enough—

Enough—just to be good!

To lift our hearts where they are understood;  
To let the thirst for worldly power and place  
Go unappeased; to smile back in God's face

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With the glad lips our mothers used to kiss.

Ah ! though we miss

All else but this,

To be good is enough !"

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THE CARLYLES — THE VERY  
HUMANEST LOVE-STORY

A LITTLE love, a little longing, a little bliss, a long, workaday lifetime, deepening shadows, twilight, alone, vain longings, release. So might one spell the love-story of most lives.

“Blind and deaf that we are: oh think, if thou yet love anybody living, wait not till *Death* sweep down the paltry little dust-clouds and idle dissonances of the moment; and all be at last so mournfully clear and beautiful when it is too late!”

The man who wrote these heart-breaking lines sat in an upper, “sound-proof” room in Cheyne Row, Chelsea, London, on a July day in 1866. As he sat down, in the desolate house, to give vent to his feelings in a flood of recollections of “her,” he wrote at the head of his ram-

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bling memories, "14th July, twelfth Saturday *since*." Since when? Since Saturday, April 21, of that year, when

"—she was snatched from me, and in all my life (as I feel ever since) there fell on me no misfortune like it;—which has smitten my whole world into universal wreck . . . and extinguished whatever light of cheerfulness and loving hopefulness life still had in it for me."

One of the brightest, most promising young men who graduated from Edinburgh University in the early years of this century was Edward Irving, a pet of all his professors from the Academy up, a "proper," rather self-satisfied, "good-boy" sort of fellow who believed himself called to preach, but had no little difficulty in making others believe so with him. In 1810, through the good offices of his Edinburgh professors, he was appointed to the charge of a small academy at Haddington, not far from Edinburgh, and there in addition to



THOMAS CARLYLE  
At the age of thirty-five



JANE WELSH CARLYLE  
From a miniature



## THE VERY HUMANEST LOVE-STORY

teaching the youth of the place he had a nine-year-old girl brought to him for tutelage in Latin, which she was determined to learn.

Her name was Jane Baillie Welsh, and she was the beautiful and imperious little daughter of a very well-to-do physician of Haddington. The grave young Mr. Irving undertook the teaching of Jane Welsh and found it very interesting, so interesting, as time went on and he saw her develop into witching young womanhood, that he lost his heart to his pupil. But he was already "as good as engaged" to a young woman in Kirkcaldy, where also he had taught and preached, and this young woman refused, even on request, to release him from the "understanding;" and he could not withdraw, because such an action would have been as dishonorable, as scandalous in a minister in those days as actual repudiation of marriage vows. It is not unlikely that lovely little Mistress Jane,

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with her host of lovers falling ready and willing victims to her coquetries, was flattered by the regard of her reverend teacher. He was very much her senior, and gave, no doubt, an impression of being very "hard to impress," which made his conquest doubly sweet. And, doubtless, if Miss Martin of Kirkcaldy had not been so obdurate in holding her clerical lover, Miss Welsh of Haddington would have become Mrs. Edward Irving. Because she couldn't be Mrs. Irving whether she would or not, Miss Welsh, woman-like, regarded herself with all the more injured air and the bound-fast Mr. Irving with all the more favor (like all the ripest peaches of life, just beyond reach and therefore the more alluring), and to the day of her death hated Mrs. Irving with great cordiality.

But "when the half-gods go, the gods arrive." Edward Irving was a nice figure on which to hang girlish

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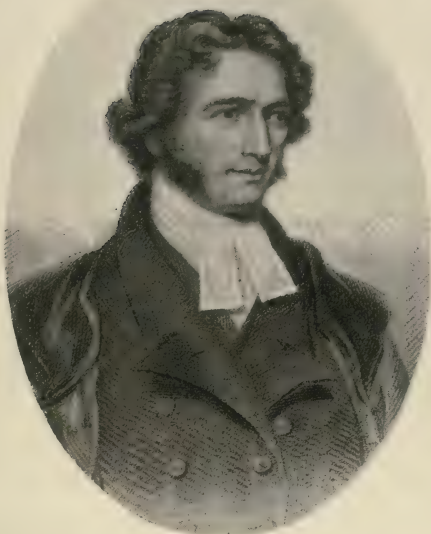
fancy, and his unavailing love for her was rare food for the romantic mind of girlhood, deliciously concrete in sprightly Jeannie Welsh. But he was to serve her a better purpose yet ; he was manifestly (to all eyes but the indignant Miss Welsh's) no man for her, but he was to introduce to her one who was.

Irving used to talk a good deal to a friend named Carlyle about the delightful Welsh family, and especially about the tantalizing, high-spirited little beauty, Jane, and one sunny afternoon in June, 1821, he took this Thomas Carlyle a long, sixteen-mile walk by a roundabout way from Kirkcaldy, where he and Carlyle were teachers together, to Haddington. They called upon the Welshes, in whose home "was opulence (*without* waste), elegance, good sense, silent, practical affection and manly wisdom ; from threshold to roof-tree no paltriness or unverity admitted into it ;" and here, in the June gloaming, making his

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first formal call in what seemed to peasant-born Carlyle the biggest and finest room he was ever in, the flashing dark eyes of Jeannie Welsh kindled a flame that was inextinguishable. Forty-five years after, he was able to recall that on the return of the two young men to Haddington Inn for the night, they exchanged some gentle chaffing on going to bed, during which Carlyle admitted his susceptibility to Miss Jeannie's charms.

Here was a pretty muddle ! Thomas Carlyle was twenty-six years of age ; he was peasant-born, of people of sterling worth and keen native intelligence, but humble, hard-toiling lives, and no education ; he was rough and uncouth in all his ways, this young son of the farm-folk, unaccustomed to all the little delicacies of gentler life, blunt, rather unkempt, and already a confirmed dyspeptic. To add to all this he was poor, and ploddingly ambitious along lines



EDWARD IRVING

From the portrait by Huffman



## THE VERY HUMANEST LOVE-STORY

which held no promise of decent sustenance for so much as a family of field-mice. And Jane Welsh was twenty, an only child, inheriting a most delicate constitution and many ills of the flesh, reared in luxury, bright, imperious,—“spoiled,” we should say,—beautiful, impractical, with a host of lovers forever dangling at her apron-strings.

But the mischief was done “at first sight,” for not only did Carlyle admit as much to Irving (who was not a little piqued when he found it really so) but Miss Welsh wrote, soon afterwards, to one of her girl friends describing Carlyle in glowing terms, comparing him to her ideal of a lover, Rousseau’s St. Preux, and declaring him satisfactory in everything but “elegance!” Carlyle, on the other hand, did not for even a short season fall into any fond fatuousness about the affair. He made up his mind very soon after meeting Jane Welsh that she was the woman he would wed if he

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could, but he did not deceive himself about the prospects of such a marriage. In March, 1822, he wrote to a friend who had been disappointed in love by a woman of genius, saying that, much as he admired genius in a sweetheart, he should

“—pause before recommending it to any honest man in a wife. Those women of genius, sir, are the very d——l when you take them on a wrong tack. I know very well that I myself—if ever I marry, which seems possible at best—am to have one of them for my helpmate, and I expect nothing but that our life will be the most turbulent, incongruous thing on earth,—a mixture of honey and wormwood, the sweetest and the bitterest,—or, as it were, at one time the clearest sunshiny weather in Nature, then whirlwinds and sleet and frost.”

He was not misled into thinking life with Jane Welsh would be an indefinite perpetuation of the June gloaming in her mother's parlor, when her pretty graces first made his heart captive. He was a

## THE VERY HUMANEST LOVE-STORY

canny Scot, and he saw all the infinite difficulties in such a union as he desired, but he weighed difficulties against gain and nothing could outweigh the prospect of a life with Jane, though he admitted that he expected storm and shine "and the sunshine always in the smallest quantity!"

And as for Jane—was she blind to the real outcome of this enjoyable flirtation with the poor, brilliant young student? Who can know the heart of a woman? Not by anything she says, at least, can we ever judge it, for to women certainly, if not to all mankind, language was given to conceal thought, and no one makes better use of this kindly providence than the maid in love.

At any rate, there could have been no better combination of circumstances to make her withdraw her fancy from Irving and bestow it anew more worthily. Carlyle was poor and sickly and to all outward appearances the most "un-

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likely" among her lovers. But here awoke the eternal woman in Jane, and the love of her heart went out in divine yearning to the man who had such sore need of her, as she thought. The petted beauty had drunk deep of the cup of flattering admiration; now she was tasting a rarer, more satisfying nectar—the first stirrings of that real love which has its fundamental principle in the beloved's need of it, real or imagined. Jane Welsh began to feel that she could be something to Thomas Carlyle that perhaps no other woman could; and she was tenderer with him than with other swains because he was poor and delicate. Ah, divine tenderness, like that of a mother for her unloveliest child!

His ailments stirred her pity; his struggles excited her admiration. To sympathize with him openly was out of the question, for he was poor and proud and a Scotchman, but to accomplish the same gentle ministry by other means

## THE VERY HUMANEST LOVE-STORY

Jane wrote to tell him of her deep *gratitude* to him for all he had done for her in developing her ideas of life, and the like.

"It is a pity," she wrote in July, 1823, "there is no other language of gratitude than what is in everybody's mouth. I am sure the gratitude I feel towards you is not in everybody's heart."

Evidently Miss Jeannie liked the idea of gratitude, as Carlyle liked it and said so, for less than a month later in another letter she says :

"I owe you much ; feelings and sentiments that ennoble my character, that give dignity, interest, and enjoyment to my life—in return I can only love you, and that I do from the bottom of my heart."

One can imagine only one kind of reply to that declaration, but when Carlyle received it he was suffering more acutely even than usual from his bilious dyspepsia, and his worldly prospects seemed of the worst in consequence ;

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so he wrote a tender, affectionate letter of a "brotherly" sort, begging Miss Welsh—

"Think of me as one that will live and die to do you service; whose good-will, if his good deeds cannot, may perhaps deserve some gratitude, but whom it is dangerous and useless to love."

Ah! but Jeannie's black eyes must have flashed fire and her cheeks burned rosy red when she got that letter. And what does she do but write him, spiritedly enough, that she did indeed love him, but as she would love a brother (!), and she would be his "truest, most devoted friend" while she "breathed the breath of life," but his wife—*never*, NEVER, under any circumstances!

Now, Carlyle had not asked her to be his wife, and if it is bad enough for a proud man to ask and be refused, it is worse to be refused without having asked. He might easily have replied to some such effect, and hurt the haughty little

## THE VERY HUMANEST LOVE-STORY

beauty beyond all power of his to repair. But he didn't. He was a peasant, and he was not "elegant," nor knew he aught of the ways and manners of fine society, but he had a true gentleman's tender heart and natural chivalry towards a woman in a distressful circumstance. So he wrote to Jeannie, humbly :

"I honor your wisdom and decision. You have put our concerns *on the very footing where I wished them to stand*. Thus, then, it stands ; you love me as a sister and will not wed ; I love you in all possible senses of the word and will not wed any more than you. Does this reassure you?"

It did reassure her ! The talk about not wedding was of no moment ; he knew it, and she knew it, and each knew that the other knew it. But it served to tide over the momentary unpleasantness. The real thing was the mutual declaration of love ; and, in a fine humor with herself, with Thomas, and with all the world was Jane when she wrote :

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“ My happiness is incomplete while you do not share it. . . . Stripped of the veil of poetry which your imagination spreads around me, I am so undeserving of your love ! But I shall deserve it—shall be a noble woman if efforts of mine can make me so.”

Evidently Thomas was “reassured,” too, for the next thing we hear of him is his report to her of having been house-hunting “for some cottage among trees, beside the still waters ; some bright little place with a stable behind it, a garden and a rood of green—where I might fairly commence housekeeping and the writing of books !”

But face to face with the near prospect of undertaking life in a cottage with Thomas Carlyle, Miss Jane’s courage began to waver, and in this fashion matters went on for more than two years. First time he urged her, coy little Jane said she “loved him,” confessed to admiration, affection, sympathy, but told him he was not to suppose

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she loved him so much as to do whatever he liked. "I will marry no one else," she grants him, but not yet will she marry him, concluding,

"you need not attempt further argument. My decisions, when I do decide, are unalterable as the laws of the Medes and Persians. Write instantly and tell me that you are content to leave the event to time and destiny, and in the meanwhile to continue my friend and guardian, which you have so long faithfully been, and nothing more."

Thomas, however, had had enough of the "friend and guardian" business. He wanted to be married and settled in life; he wanted his "little woman," and he told her, prettily, that he was decided,—

"You have to decide, my own dear love, to take me—or leave me—now!"

To which she replied that she was not quite in love with him yet, but that in a year or two perhaps the "only" destiny for her would be to be his wife; but

for fear Thomas might take this too literally she added, sweetly, that rather than give him up she would marry him "to-morrow."

They were married on October 17, 1826—more than five years after their first meeting—and went to live at Comley Bank, Edinburgh, where Jane took up her first struggles with house-keeping, and where more than one eminent man came to the little weekly tea-parties of the entertaining young couple. Carlyle was beginning, in his own words, "to get into note and employment," but his health continued wretched and Edinburgh living was expensive and unfitting for literary labor, so in May, 1828, the Carlyles moved to Craigenputtock, a farm on the moors of Dumfriesshire, which belonged to Dr. Welsh's estate. Carlyle added a second story to the farm-house, built a smaller house which, together with the farm, he leased to his brother Alexander for two hundred pounds a

## THE VERY HUMANEST LOVE-STORY

year, and took up his residence there, staying for six years, during which time he devoted himself very zealously to literary pursuits, *Sartor Resartus* being among the results.

But it was a lonely life, on the moors, and for a student who contemplated such researches as Carlyle did it was a long way from great collections of books. In May, 1834, they made their last flitting, to London, where they settled in Great Cheyne Row, Chelsea—in a house now perhaps the most visited of any private residence in all London, owing to the forty-seven years of Carlyle's occupancy. Here he wrote *The French Revolution*, *Cromwell*, and *Frederick the Great*; here he was visited by nearly every great man of that period; here his Jane lived and suffered what she called "that long disease, my life;" hither she was brought, out of her brougham, dead, on an April day in 1866; here he died nearly fifteen years afterwards; here

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is the famous "sound-proof" study, and here, preserved as a public memorial, are all the thousand and one reminders of their long tenancy. Here Jane Carlyle kept the little chair in which she had sat as a child and in which she hoped with all her woman's heart that her child might sit. Here they talked over this sorrow, and after she was gone from him he wrote of it in loving memory:

"Her little bit of a first chair, its wee, wee arms, etc., visible to me in the closet at this moment, is still here, and always was; I have looked at it hundreds of times, from of *old*, with many thoughts. No daughter or son of *hers* was to sit there; so it had been appointed us, my Darling. I have no book thousandth part so beautiful as *Thou*; but these were *our* only 'children,'—and, in a true sense, these *were* verily OURS, and will perhaps live some time in the world, after we are both gone; and be of no damage to the poor, brute chaos of a world, let us hope! The will of the Supreme shall be accomplished. *Amen.*"

Here, in this old Chelsea house, Thomas Carlyle realized the vision of

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married life he described in his letter to his disappointed friend. Here Jane Carlyle lay ill, year after year, and he sat above her in his study and toiled at the great histories while she hungered for the touches of his hands. Here, in the drawing-room, night after night, she lay on the couch, a pale bundle of agony, and he talked on and on to her, according to his anguished recollection, of the battles of Frederick, when her heart starved for less intellectual and more human companionship. And here he sat, alone and comfortless, when she was gone, and grieved his heart out that he had not been more kind, that he had toiled so for fame, for *Cromwell* and *Frederick* and *Mirabeau*, and had left his little Jeannie to her own life, conscious always that he loved her, but content never to tell her so. Ah, surely it was the very humanest love-story that one could read, for even so do not we all?

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## SHELLEY, THE SKYLARK POET

**O**NE does not unhesitatingly take up the theme of Shelley's private life and personal relations, for thereon calumny and social ostracism sat during practically the whole of his brief career, and about it acrimonious debate has waged ever since. It is in no sense within the province of this little sketch to attempt a defence of Shelley's philosophy, nor an extenuation of his actions; but not the slightest story, even of his love-life, can be told without going somewhat into detail of the characteristics which set him apart from other men.

The case of Shelley is simply put if one remembers that he never "grew up." Any one who understands the spirit of youth will understand Shelley



PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

From the portrait by Miss Curran, 1819



## SHELLEY, THE SKYLARK POET

without any difficulty. Born to sing the rapturous praise of beauty "in this our world," to scatter, as Edmund Gosse exquisitely says of him, "the liquid joy of life over humanity," Shelley was dowered for the task with more of the essential qualities of youth and fewer of the essential qualities of maturity than other men, else he had not led all men in the perception and expression of beauty. Now, youth has its limitations as well as its glories, its absurd bogeys as well as its superb faith, its trying qualities as well as its endearing innocence. It has its sufferings, too, as well as its joys ; and withal, it was with no sentimental misunderstanding of the real heart of childhood that Christ said of such is the kingdom of heaven. Yet the child-heart is essentially lawless and filled with a zeal for destruction. It is safe to say that at some time in his life every child that is city-bred entertains an apocalyptic vision of a state of bliss made

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possible only by the annihilation of all policemen, not because he has ever come into any direct conflict of wills with the blue-coat, but merely because, to the boundless restiveness of childhood, the policeman appears a brutal incarnation of "Don't," with an ogre-like zest for visiting an unimaginable horror called justice on the head of any child who does not shudder as he passes on his beat. Eventually that child, if he turn out a righteous citizen, cheerfully pays tithe of his substance to keep that sturdy blue-coat guardian of the peace ; he no longer fears him, but regards him as his servant. It is a change of view-point merely,—one of the compensations of growing up. Shelley, as has been said, never grew up ; he died before he was thirty, but his worldly wisdom never got beyond thirteen. When he began, at a very early age, to look about him in the world, he saw a great many pitiful things, and straightway jumped to the

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conclusion that conditions were radically wrong, and humanity was the victim of its lawgivers. Whereupon he was seized with a wild desire to annihilate all policemen of the social and moral worlds, and thereunto dedicated his fledgling powers; and as he was apparently old enough to know better, he got himself cordially disliked and energetically prosecuted. But the little bit of a boy who sits on his door-step and dreams of the extermination of the police and all who represent "Don't" is the Christ-blessed child-heart just the same, and into his lawless little heart come, with the restiveness against restraint, the purest faith and the shiningest visions vouchsafed to human kind. The old world works out its equations so, and the Kingdom of Heaven looks on and approves. It was because he was sent to sing the songs of youth that maturity never touched Shelley. But not every one that prates of the

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loveliness of youth knows how to make loving allowance for its naughtinesses, which are as essential parts of it as its innocence and its faith ; and in Shelley's day there was a feebler understanding of the heart of youth even than now, so it was small leniency the poet got from his law-abiding seniors.

Shelley came, as every one knows, of titled and wealthy Sussex folk, and he "came" on August 4, 1792. His father was an upright, phlegmatic, beef-eating English gentleman and member of Parliament, and all the rest of Shelley's world in childhood was of the same upright, tradition-governed, phlegmatic, and beef-eating sort,—a sturdy, honorable lot of folk, untroubled with imaginations and untrammelled by ideals other than neighborhood ones. Into this matter-of-fact, well-to-do, conscientious family Fate precipitated, in the person of its oldest son and heir, a spirit whose lack of soul kinship with

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them is comparable only to the inconceivable situation of a veritable young skylark bound by a freak of circumstance to a very high-pedigreed group of barnyard fowls, his contempt of their earth-scratching ways exceeded only by their contempt of his inexcusable eccentricities and meagre appearance.

He must have known from the first, or very nearly from the first, that he was born to fly ; that the free blue air, and not the trodden ground, was his field ; and that his wings, and not his feet, were to be his main dependence. But his first flights brought him the knowledge that he was a bird in leash, a prisoner to strings of social law and tradition and policy, and the free bird-heart in him leaped rebelliously ; and looking about, with an eye for strings, it seemed to him that all the world, or at least all the freedom-loving world, was in leash to binding laws that had no origin in right ; and being young, very young,

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Shelley was sore undone by this, and flew in the face of God and man with bitter accusations of injustice. And man got very wroth, and retaliated upon Shelley with acerbity. But God only smiled patiently, we know; He had high plans for Shelley, and He knew Shelley was going to fulfil them; so, like thousands of less benignant fathers, He could afford to be misunderstood for a while, could afford to endure Shelley's taunts and kicks, even his open treason, because He knows the heart of youth, and because He knew the end.

In early childhood Shelley lived apart in a dream-world of his own, where Fancy built her paradise without regard to the laws of men. His only brother was nearly fourteen years his junior, so that playmates the young poet had none except his little sisters. Shy, quiet, a dreamer, and unversed in all the ways of the average young Briton, Shelley was sent, at ten years of age, to a large

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boys' school. Now, the average British schoolboy, as Professor Dowden quaintly puts it, "has virtues of his own, but he is not a being compact of light and sweetness," nor has he any disposition to treat even with tolerance the individual who is so compact. In his first school experience Shelley was terribly unhappy, and spent much time in tears, we are told. From there he went to Eton, where his martyrdom at the hands of his fellows continued. A shy nature and a slight physique had but one recourse. Shelley simply could not refute the charges against him by gathering his forces and making a physical bully of himself,—the royal road to the esteem of the British schoolboy, as triumph in arms is to this day the royal road to the esteem of his father. There was only the inferior grade of courage, which is moral courage(!), left for him to lay claim to; and in very young minds there is only one way of accomplishing this, and

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that is by defying the powers that rule. Practically all schoolboy pranks that are not designed to demonstrate muscular prowess are designed to demonstrate a greater or less contempt of authority. Muscular supremacy being denied Shelley, he retrieved himself, to a degree, in the eyes of his fellows by asserting that he had no respect for the masters, and by essaying to prove it. Naturally, this did not make life any easier for him in the long run, for, while it eased his position with his peers, it greatly strained his relations with his superiors, until Master Shelley got himself sent home in disgrace. In Oxford, some years later, there was a repetition of the same. Shelley, having tasted of the tribute paid to rebels, took courage in rebellion, and from having declared, not without good justification, his contempt for the majority of the professors, he waxed bolder in his defiance and declared there was no God, writing and

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putting into circulation a pamphlet in which he set forth "The Necessity for Atheism." And staid old Oxford took all this very seriously ; nothing short of consternation followed upon the mad act of an eighteen-year-old boy denying God. Without doubt it was very foolish, very heterodox, very misguided ; but orthodoxy only conserves the forces of this world ; it belongs to maturity ; whereas in the heterodoxy of youth the old world gets all its fresh impulses. But the learned dons of Oxford, set over youth to teach it the differential calculus and the philosophy of the ancients, held themselves under no obligation to cope with youth's vagaries, nay, with its world-old characteristics. So long as youth was instructed, like Aurora Leigh,

"by how many feet  
Mount Chimborazo outsoars Teneriffe,"

it was no business of age to meet the restiveness of the young spirit with com-

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placency. The holder of heterodox views was a menace to the university, and must go, ere he corrupt others. It never occurred to the august professors, we must suppose, that, as they were training young men for the battle of life in a sceptical age, it might be well worth while to teach them to meet young Shelley in the arena and remain unharmed. So they put Shelley out as pernicious, and took no thought of the world at large, which could not put him out, and into which his shielded fellow-students soon must go.

This, as has been said, is not an examination into Shelley's peculiar ideas and disbeliefs, but a story of his loves, no story of which could be told without first telling something of his heterodoxies, all his life was so colored by his fierce young radicalism. The first great sorrow of his life came to him just prior to his expulsion from Oxford. For some months he had been enjoying a very intimate cor-

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respondence with his cousin, Harriet Grove, a beautiful young girl, just his age, whom he had known from childhood, but for whom a considerably more than cousinly affection had been entertained by Shelley for some time. If they were not actually engaged to marry, at least it was understood, both by the young people themselves and by their elders, that such a consummation would occur when the future Baronet and Parliamentarian was through his university course. But the atheistic and socialistic tone of Shelley's letters to the young girl finally alarmed her family, and communication between the two was interdicted, a marriage being soon after arranged for Miss Grove. Shelley took this in no docile spirit; it was a manifestation of his arch-enemy, Intolerance, for which he swore to be revenged.

Writing to his friend Hogg on the subject of this loss, Shelley says :

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“I swear that never will I forgive intolerance ! It is the only point on which I allow myself to encourage revenge ; every moment shall be devoted to my object which I can spare ; and let me hope that it will not be a blow which spends itself, and leaves the wretch at rest—but lasting, long revenge ! I am convinced, too, that it is of great disservice to society—that it encourages prejudices which strike at the root of the dearest, the tenderest, of its ties. Oh ! how I wish I were the avenger ! that it were mine to crush the demon ; to hurl him to his native hell, never to rise again, and thus to establish forever perfect and universal toleration. I expect to gratify some of this insatiable feeling in poetry. You shall see—you shall hear—how it has injured me. She is no longer mine ! She abhors me as a sceptic, as what *she* was before. Oh, bigotry ! When I pardon this last, this severest of thy persecutions, may heaven (if there be wrath in heaven) blast me !”

The author of this solemn pledge to life-long war on the spirit of intolerance was eighteen years old,—an Oxford student, to be sure, but hardly out of the class of the little boy who shakes his wee fist at the retreating figure of a police-

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man and vows within his sturdy little heart to defy a policeman openly and successfully, some day. The little boy's world, however, gives only an amused heed to him, or none at all; Shelley's world took him as seriously as if the angel-faced lad with the wondrous fancy were indeed the very Arch-Enemy of mankind. The result was that the angel-faced lad retreated farther and farther under cover of his resentment and defiance, until he got himself ingloriously expelled from Oxford, ignominiously disinherited by his father, forbidden intercourse with his family, and turned loose to shift for himself, in his battle against intolerance, on nothing a year. Now, for a time at least, and especially to an ardent, artistic temperament, suffering for a cause is just so much fuel to the fire, and we may believe that for the first few months, anyway, the young apostle of tolerance greatly enjoyed his Ishmaelish position.

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Among other things, cut off from home associations, he made surreptitious visits to his little sisters at their boarding-school, where he found much in the petty discipline and punishments of the place to challenge his apostolic spirit. Prior to reforming the abuses of all the world, what could be better practice for the reformer than championing the grievances of his pinafores and pig-tailed sisters languishing under the despotic tyranny of a boarding-school? And from interfering in behalf of his sisters after the flesh, what could be more natural to the young socialist, who called all men his brothers and all women his sisters, than that he should lend himself to the cause of any distressed damsel of their acquaintance? A man sworn to the extermination of intolerance has a big job on his hands!

So Shelley extended his righteous championship of the weak and oppressed to include Harriet Westbrook, a friend

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of his eldest sister and three years his own junior. Harriet was the daughter of a well-to-do tavern-keeper, a delicately-formed, graceful, pretty little girl, with a more than fair intelligence and a frank, happy disposition. She had had, however, a most indifferent "bringing-up," with little or nothing in her home life to enlist her admiration or quicken her ideals. In other words, she was a dissatisfied little girl who was more than ready to imbibe Shelley's preachments of dissatisfaction with the world in general, and Shelley, delighted with the ardor of his first disciple, expended a great deal of time on her indoctrination into the warfare on intolerance. And little Harriet, the daughter of a tavern-keeper, was no less delighted to command such interested attention from a beautiful young gentleman of eighteen, a relative of the Duke of Norfolk and heir to a baronetcy and a great estate. And when her school-mates pointed the finger of scorn and

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reprobation at her as the friend of an atheist, Harriet, who hadn't the slightest conception what an atheist might be, thoroughly enjoyed the opprobrium, and the *éclat* of telling Shelley about her martyrdom. Shelley was indignant, of course. Such a dreadful state of affairs! The world was arrayed against them, no doubt he told the delighted Harriet, but it should not crush them! No, no! So the gallant young apostle stood closer than ever to the distressed damsel's side, and the distressed damsel enjoyed her romantic situation to the full.

Presently, however, Shelley found a more flattering convert in the person of Miss Elizabeth Hitchener, a school-teacher of humble origin but much cleverness. She was ten years older than Shelley, plain and swarthy, of a temperament alternating between excitable high spirits and deep depression and melancholy, an eccentric, conceited, but undeniably clever woman, who complained

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that no one "understood" her and was, consequently, very much out of sorts with her world. She gave an ardent hearing to young Shelley, and brought so much alertness of mind and vigor of intellect to her discipleship that Shelley was charmed. Harriet was a trusting and worshipful little girl, but Miss Hitchener was a woman of power, his very "soul's sister." Moreover, Miss Hitchener lived at a distance, and Shelley's communication with her was by letter almost exclusively, which was a great advantage ; if there were moments when Miss Hitchener's soul was not on fire with revolt from the oppression of intolerance, no hint of such lapses crept into her fervid letters, and Shelley, who seldom found anyone with an intensity equal to his own, and had always to be overlooking the apparent lethargy of his friends, considered that he had found his soul's mate in Elizabeth Hitchener. Little Harriet was clearly outclassed, for while

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her unswerving worship was very sweet, his association with her was very close and there must have been moments when Harriet's hatred of intolerance waxed faint beside her love for "sweets" and outings and new hair-ribbons. One love of little Harriet's never waxed faint, however, and that was her love for her handsome young teacher, and when his interest in her suffered an eclipse, Harriet promptly went into a decline. Her letters to Shelley took on a pitiful tone ; she was wretched in mind and body ; persecuted in her own home ; obliged to return to her hated school where, as Shelley well knew, she was the victim of opprobrium on account of her association with him. Oh, dear ! Oh, dear ! What *should* she do ? She even went so far as to inquire of Shelley if he would advise suicide. If not, should she resist her father, or meekly bow to his tyranny and return to school, there to languish and die ? Only let Shelley tell her what

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to do, and she would do it ; but let him tell her quickly, for the time for revolt was short. Shelley was in Wales, meditating among the mountains and spending a large part of his time in inditing letters to Miss Hitchener, which ended only at the full limit of weight the postal law would allow. Of course, Shelley's soul was stirred at the inconceivable cruelty of Mr. Westbrook compelling his sixteen-year-old daughter to return to a school she did not like. And of course the apostle of freedom from intolerance (which meant insistence on doxies objectionable to Shelley) could not advise submission to tyranny ; so he wrote to the tyrant, recommending gentler measures. The tyrant remained inexorable, and Harriet straightway grew desperate and wrote to Shelley, offering to fly with him. Shelley had no particular desire to be flown with, but he was sworn to fight oppression at any cost ; so he promptly took coach for Lon-

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don, and lost no time in calling on Harriet, whose wasted appearance greatly shocked him. Harriet thereupon made an avowal of her love, and the young reformer, who had just celebrated his nineteenth birthday, gallantly told the unhappy damsel not to worry ; he would devote his life to making her happy. Much restored by this promise, Harriet besought an early flight, and in that same month of August, 1811, these misguided children eloped to Scotland and were married. Shelley had not a penny's income ; he even had to borrow money for his northward flight, and live upon the easy-going good nature of his Scotch landlord for the first weeks of his married life. Thus began an ill-assorted and ill-starred union which lasted something less than three years, and which the world will probably never tire of discussing. Without entering into the interminable debate, to prove guilty or to exculpate either party, it

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must suffice to say here that, briefly put, Shelley tired of his bargain and quit. There are rights and wrongs on both sides, as is usually the case. The life of the young couple was erratic and full of wanderings; it was, moreover, marked by an insufficiency of income which Harriet soon found unromantic enough, and by the continuous presence of her sister Eliza, an elderly spinster of trying disposition, to say the least, whom Shelley found compulsorily included in his bargain when he agreed to make Harriet happy for life. Then, too, Harriet's interest in the suppression of tyranny died away after her marriage, and a plaintive longing for the fleshpots and luxuries of the polite world took possession of her. And Shelley was a man to live with whom required a special grace of love and patience; he disregarded every known rule of eating, sleeping, and dressing, disdaining meals in favor of pocketfuls of bread and rais-

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ins, which he could munch as he walked, sleeping when others were awake, waking and wanting company the long night through until dawn, and wearing the most outlandish of clothes in the most careless possible manner,—a very “trying” man, without doubt. The burden of the discontent seems to have been with him, however, though perhaps he would have endured it to the end had he not met the woman who seemed to him from the first, and who eventually proved herself to be, his soul’s one mate and complement, foreordained from all eternity; though we can never know whether Shelley persuaded himself (as he did) that Harriet had been untrue to him, because he wanted to enter into a happier union, or whether, if he had believed in Harriet, he would have put away from him all thought of another marriage. Certainly he never dreamed of shirking his responsibility towards her as he recognized that re-

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sponsibility. To the end of his life and with great conviction he believed that she had been faithless to him and had forfeited her claims to his conjugal love ; but he never planned otherwise than to care for her always, to share his little means with her, to give her freely of his tenderest solicitude and counsel and companionship. He even went so far, in his marvellous ignorance of the woman heart, as to imagine that Harriet might take up her residence near him and live on intimate terms with her former husband and the woman who had supplanted her in his affections. Shelley was enough of a visionary to imagine this quite feasible, and to be sorely hurt because it did not prove so.

The woman—or girl, for she was only a slip of a lass of seventeen—who came into Shelley's life at this juncture to bless it at every point thenceforth was Mary Godwin, daughter of the philosopher and social reformer, William Godwin,

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and that brilliant woman, Mary Wollstonecraft, who had died at her daughter's birth. A step-mother of shrewish temper soon came into the little Mary's life, and in consequence her home was never to her what home should be to a young girl of ardent temperament and quiet, scholarly disposition. Under the tuition of her famous father, and in association with his apostles and friends, Mary early developed remarkable mental ability, and under the unsympathetic rule of the second Mrs. Godwin she nurtured an intense love for her own gifted and exquisite mother, whose books and portrait brought her near the child she had never lived to cherish. On the one hand, the girl imbibed a radical philosophy of social reform, and thought deeply, vigorously along such lines ; on the other hand, she lived a quiet life of great wistfulness and gentle melancholy, mourning passionately the lovely mother upon whom she might have poured out

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a tenderly worshipful love. It was as if her brief experience of life had prepared her specially for Shelley, who found tremendous stimulus in her mind and glorious haven in her capacity for devotion.

He was an ardent disciple of her father's, and was much at their home in those spring days of 1814, when the situation between Harriet and himself was so full of strain and unhappiness. It is impossible to tell from all the evidence just what actually occurred,—whether Harriet left Shelley, as some aver, or whether he refused to live with her ; certain it is, however, that Shelley suffered no little in it all, and that Mary Godwin knew he was suffering and divined, if he did not tell her, the cause, and that she lavished on him a gentle pity which, together with the delightful stimulus of her mental qualities, won Shelley's heart and sealed the fate of her own. She had met many brilliant men, but never one

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who seemed so made for love ; and he had known women both wise and lovely, but never one who so marvellously combined the qualities that make for comradeship and for romantic love. A very short time served to make plain to both the situation between them, but at first no idea seems to have been entertained by either that more could come of it than a union of souls, unanswerable for the laws of affinity, but bound by laws equally high to respect other ties. It was a leading article of Godwin's creed, and, as such, of Shelley's and Mary's, that a marriage relation properly existed only so long as both parties found in it the supremest satisfaction of their lives ; when it ceased to be that, the spiritual marriage, which was the only true bond, was dissolved. Theoretically this was very lofty, but practically it was not very tenable, and Godwin was not slow to take the side of old-fashioned conservatism when it came



MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY  
From the portrait by R. Rothwell, R.H.A., 1841



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to a point of his daughter's association with a married man. So far from recognizing the spiritual divorcement of Harriet and Shelley, Godwin did everything in his power to keep them together ; but it could not be. Shelley seems to have made many strenuous efforts to overcome the difficulties, and so, too, Harriet, but there was apparently no path of return in the maze of their misunderstandings, and Shelley soon abandoned his effort to find one, though he continued to write frequently and solicitously to Harriet, and to provide for her every want so far as he was able. Godwin, however, was so far from being satisfied with this that he forbade Shelley his house, but the seeds of his life-long teaching had taken deep root in his daughter's heart, and when she felt assured that Shelley had done his best by Harriet she held it no harm to minister to him out of the abundance of her affection as she could. So she continued

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to meet him, oftenest by the grave of her mother, where he had first avowed his love for her, and, the parental displeasure against him not abating one whit, Mary readily consented to fly with Shelley to the Continent, there to give him, undisturbed, of her love and her society. The girl was absolutely pure-souled and high-minded in it all ; she was passionately in love with Shelley, but she was also in love with right and had been bred to regard suffering for the right as the high privilege of an elect few. She was not the girl to fly in the face of her conscience, even for her love, but her conscience did not frown on her union with Shelley ; she believed her love and his need made a complementary state of affairs which left her an undivided duty, so she braved social disapproval, and, what was infinitely more to her, her father's disapproval, and fled to France with him late in July, 1814. She was seventeen, he was not quite twenty-

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two. Their world may well have thought it a mad flight and predicted disaster for the girl, if not for both. But the pages of biography unfold few idylls more exquisite than the eight years that followed, until the storm-lashed waters of Spezzia Bay engulfed the poet and left his Mary to survive him by nearly thirty years. Their life together was marked by every conceivable manner of unrest, annoyance, and distress except diminution of their devotion to each other, but in spite of miseries far too many to enumerate, in spite of poverty and persecution and the coldness of friends and relatives, and a thousand evils, the quality of enduring love that existed between Shelley and his Mary stands out radiant, pure, unassailable, one of the warmest, tenderest, finest things in the personal history of literature.

On November 9, 1816, poor Harriet, who had sunk through disappointment to drink and despair, drowned herself in

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the Serpentine. Shelley, who was in Bath when the sad affair happened, hastened to London, shocked inexpressibly by the pitiful tragedy. Indeed, the distress he suffered because of it, although he never held himself in anywise to blame for it, remained poignant to the day of his death. The death of poor little Harriet, however, made possible a legal marriage between Shelley and Mary Godwin, and this was performed on December 30, 1816, and they settled for the winter in Buckinghamshire, at Great Marlow, where he wrote, during the summer of 1817, *The Revolt of Islam*, to which, when it was finished, he prefixed a wondrously beautiful poem dedicating the new work to Mary. In this poem he reviews for her his life and contrasts what it was before he knew her with what it became under the influence of her love and friendship. We have space to quote only a few lines, but the poem begins :

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“So now my summer task is ended, Mary,  
And I return to thee, mine own heart's home ;  
As to his Queen some victor Knight of Faery,  
Earning bright spoils for her enchanted  
dome ;  
Nor thou disdain that, ere my fame become  
A star among the stars of mortal night,  
If it indeed may cleave its natal gloom,  
Its doubtful promise thus would I unite  
With thy beloved name, thou Child of love and  
light.”

And then, after recapitulating his lonely youth, he apostrophises her, as she came into his embittered life in her ardent young girlhood.

“How beautiful and calm and free thou wert  
In thy young wisdom, when the mortal chain  
Of Custom thou didst burst and rend in twain,  
And walk as free as light the clouds among.  
\* \* \* \* \*  
No more alone through the world's wilderness,  
Although I trod the paths of high intent,  
I journeyed now.”

Nor was this mere lover's fond idealizing ; Mary was indeed a soul-comrade,

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a tender heart's queen, a sage adviser, a worshipping and worshipful wife. Rarely has man of genius been so blessed in a mate ; she was of incalculable assistance to him while he lived, and of supreme joy and comfort, and after he died, through her long widowhood, she knew no other pleasure than aiding the extension of his fame. In those years with her Shelley abandoned somewhat his fierce warfare against intolerance in favor of the pursuit of beauty. When he was young, and first felt the wrongs of the world, even before he himself had suffered deeply, he acted just as youth has ever done ; he regarded the hurts of humanity, worn bone-deep and raw by fretting under leash, and ascribed them at once, with a mighty indignation, to the tightness of the cords, not to the restiveness of the bound, and had but one burning desire,—to cut the cords ! But as time went on, and his own sorrows increased, so that it was always

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from the depths he soared to the heights,  
exemplifying his own lines,—

“ Most wretched men  
Are cradled into poetry by wrong,  
They learn in suffering what they teach in song,”

it was given to him to see what a mighty mission lay, not in vilifying the world for its abuses, but in laying bare to less-seeing eyes its loveliness. So long as individual souls must work out each his own salvation, so long

“ Men must work and women must weep,”

and sorrow must reveal the deepest secrets and submission must mark the superbest power. Glorious the skylark soul that can draw dim eyes from earth towards heaven,

“ Like a poet hidden  
In the light of thought,  
Singing hymns unbidden  
Till the world is wrought  
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not.”

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Shelley lived to be that skylark of poesy, and Mary Shelley might well count of little weight the price she paid for the joy of sharing his every thought, furthering his every flight, blessing his every return to the nest, through eight years which enriched all humankind imperishably.

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## THE VARIOUSLY ESTIMATED BYRON AND HIS LIFE OF UNREST

**I**N his memoranda, written in Ravenna in 1821, Lord Byron says :

“I have seen myself compared, personally or poetically, in English, French, German, Italian, and Portuguese, within these nine years, to Rousseau, Goethe, Young, Aretin, Timon of Athens, Dante, Petrarch, an Alabaster Vase lighted up within, Satan, Shakespeare, Bonaparte, Tiberius, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Harlequin the clown, Sternhold, and Hopkins, to the Phantasmagoria, to Henry the Eighth, to Chenier, to Mirabeau, to Young R. Dallas (the schoolboy), to Michaelangelo, to Raphael, to a *petit maître*, to Diogenes, to Childe Harold, to Lara, to the Count in ‘Beppo,’ to Milton, to Pope, to Dryden, to Burns, to Savage, to Chatterton, to ‘oft have I heard of thee, my lord Byron,’ in Shakespeare, to Churchill the poet, to Kean the actor, to Alfieri, etc., etc. The object of so many contradic-

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tory comparisons must probably be like something different from them all ; but what *that* is is more than I know, or any body else."

Perhaps no human being ever offered so many contradictions of character to the bafflement of the world at large, and one can readily believe that Byron did not himself know his actual personality from the myriad things it was likened to by myriad interested minds. There are some not unworthy folk in this world who seem to forget that the separation of sheep and goats is not promised until the Judgment Day, and who, so forgetting, are forever trying to classify humankind as only Infinite Wisdom can classify us, into the bad on the left and the good on the right, with no cross-breeds in the middle ground. Pending that separation on the Great Day, we are all cross-breeds, more or less, with no indisputable evidence, for the most part, to tell with which species we shall finally be found. It will be a day of great



LORD BYRON

From the portrait by T. Phillips, R.A.



## BYRON AND HIS LIFE OF UNREST

surprises, that final reckoning ! There'll be indignant bleaters classed as goats, and shamefaced buckers among the lambs, too surprised, for the moment, even to question how they came there. And as soon as each of us has grown a little accustomed to his own rating, and begun to look around a bit, one of the first persons whose rating many will be curious to know will be this same Lord Byron, who was so free to confess that he could not rate himself. Compounded of virtues and vices, he was, like all the rest of us ; but so bafflingly were blatant faults with secret goodnesses mixed, that we may well be glad it is not required of any of us to judge him, for never in the case of any man was the testimony of his fellows more conflicting, the evidence of witnesses more at variance.

To begin with (for one cannot begin with a man himself, but must always begin back of him somewhere), Byron's

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ancestors were a mixed lot. The Byrons were of ancient Norman blood, very respectable, for the most part, and oft accredited with deeds of valor, but given sometimes to the natural excesses of valor, which are truculence and vain-gloriousness. The great-uncle from whom the poet inherited the peerage was a murderer, who had slain his neighbor in a brawl; the poet's father was a good-natured profligate, who died young and left his son an accumulation of debts and a tendency to dissipation. On his mother's side Byron was descended from the Scottish kings, which is not so fine a thing as it may sound, for a good many of those same Scottish kings were ancestors no decent man would choose, if only ancestors were left to our choice instead of being thrust upon us, fraught with consequence, willy nilly. The chief thing Byron got from the Scottish kings seems to have been a very peppery mother, whose uncertain-

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ties of temper lent an element of tragedy, very early in life, to the existence of her little lame boy. He was a preternaturally sensitive little chap, proud as Lucifer, and sadly unable as yet to show any good cause why he should be, for he was bitterly poor (bitter, that is, for the heir to a peerage) and badly handicapped physically by a frail constitution and a deformed foot, so that he was unable to make a name for himself by any deeds of prowess among his fellows, and nothing in him gave evidence either of the brilliance of his mind, as it was to startle the world ere he was really out of his boyhood, or of that enchanting beauty of person which, as he grew to manhood, so captivated all who came in contact with him.

Before he was ten, Byron had had a love affair with his cousin, Mary Duff, in Aberdeen, where Mrs. Byron spent the first few years of her widowhood, until the death of her husband's uncle

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left the little George Noel Gordon Byron a peer of the realm, with wonderful old Newstead Abbey on the edge of Sherwood Forest—already a venerable pile when it passed into the hands of the Byrons by grant of Henry VIII.—for a homestead which his scant means never permitted him really to enjoy.

One of the first results of his elevation to the peerage was his removal from Aberdeen and consequent separation from Mary Duff, who had made so strong an impression on his youthful fancy that when he heard, at sixteen years of age, of her marriage, he nearly went into convulsions. In the mean time, however, he had managed to fall in love again, not once merely, but twice, the first time also with a cousin, Margaret Parker, who lived in the town where he was sent to school. It was a very violent case, notwithstanding his scarce thirteen years. The capacity for ardor was in the lad from the first,

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for when he was looking forward to a meeting with this adored Margaret he could neither eat nor sleep. But the course of a young nobleman's educational life took him away from Margaret, even as, three years earlier, it had taken him away from Mary Duff; and with Byron, even entering on his teens, propinquity was a great essential to the maintenance of romance. Propinquity then engaged his affections with his next-door neighbor at Newstead, with whom he became acquainted in his vacations from Harrow. She was Mary Chaworth, whose grandfather Byron's great-uncle had killed in a duel of no very reputable sort, and between the families of the young people a feud existed as bitter as that between the houses of Montagu and Capulet. If anything could be better calculated to awaken romance than a situation of this sort, its efficacy has never been discovered by Dan Cupid. Byron was fifteen when he fell in love

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with Mary Chaworth, who was three years older ; and all the glory of interdicted association was supplemented by the distracting charm which newly accredited young ladyhood, with its mystery of fledgling freshness, has ever had for the "hobbledehoy."

Naturally, Mary's ability to take seriously the love-making of a Harrow school-boy of fifteen was inconsiderable, but she allowed him to wear a ring of hers, exchanged letters and locks of hair with him, and was not ill-pleased with his declarations of love, although her affections were seriously engaged, indeed her troth was plighted to another young neighbor, a Mr. Musters, of marriageable age and substantial attractions. Him she married, after a tragedy-flavored scene with Lord Byron who, to the end of his life, nursed her rejection of him with passionate regret. Poor Mary's marriage turned out very badly, and she brooded over her ill decision

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until she went quite mad. Perhaps the life of the poet had been different had she waited until his majority and married him. Perhaps with her, and the care of their adjoining estates, and a lord's life in Parliament, he might have felt no great tendency to roam, might have been too busy and contented to versify, and so might not have worn the uneasiest head that ever bore the crown of bay. But also he might *not* have escaped his bitter, brilliant fate, even with Mary. The qualifications for a country squire and comfortable parliamentarian were not in Byron. He was built for buffeting, and his radical opinions, his imperious pride, his flashing temper alternating with taciturnity, his super-sensitiveness, leading him easily into rancor and irritability, would doubtless have made him a tormented squire and a futile politician. Fate, however, decreed that these characteristics should play a world's leading part; she had in this young man "the

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making," as we say, of a great poet of unrest ; the world needed such an one, just then ; and if George Noel Gordon, Lord Byron, showed any tendency (which we may doubt his having done) to leave the road of destiny for by-paths of obscure peace, Fate "headed him off" and kept him for her own.

If anything had been needed to set him to writing poems, Mary's rejection of him would have supplied the deficiency ; and if anything were necessary to turn him from a dilettante versifier, a graceful composer of amatory addresses in rhyme,—which most young men of fashion in his day were, to a greater or less degree,—to a serious poet with a burning pen, nothing better could have been chosen for the accomplishment of this than the savage attack on his youthful volume by the *Edinburgh Review*. The book was called *Hours of Idleness*, was published in 1807, when he was just turned nineteen, was made up of poems a trifle in-

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insipid, it is true, but far from bad, and was the subject of the most celebratedly vicious attack the *Edinburgh Review* had ever directed against a fledgling bard. Byron answered it, as is well known, in his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, a scathing satire which he bitterly regretted in his later life, and which he would never include, with his sanction, in any edition of his published works. On its appearance, however, it made him the talk of London town,—not as he was three years later, when the publication of *Childe Harold* woke England with the clarion call of new greatness and made the young lord of twenty-four the cynosure and idol of his day; but scarcely less notorious if less famous than later, in 1809 he became known to the literary set of London as a smart youth who had delivered a severe castigation in quarters where it had long been due. This notoriety, however, if it tickled his vanity in certain ways, as

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surely exposed it to suffering in others, for publicity showed him forth as a young nobleman of exceedingly impoverished condition, unable to maintain anything like a lordly state, and in consequence thereof a very moody, proudly sensitive young person. Dejected by reason of his disability, and moved, too, by a restlessness, a curse of the wandering hoof which never left him, he quitted England ringing with praises of his cleverness and audacity, and wandered, as his fancy directed, for two years, in Spain, Greece, Turkey, Albania, and Asia Minor. On his return, many sorrows lay in store for him. One after another of his boyhood's best friends passed to the grave; his mother, to whom, in spite of her variable temper, he had always been ardently attached, died, too, and although he had come of age, his guardian, Lord Carlisle, between whom and himself there was no love lost, undertook to delay the poet's ad-

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mission to his seat in the House of Lords by obliging him to set forth hardly-obtainable proofs of his legitimate right thereto. Through all these trials and vexations of spirit Byron lived at Newstead, very wretched, and worked on *Childe Harold*, the first cantos of which were published in the spring of 1812; and "I awoke one morning," says Byron, "and found myself famous."

Let it be borne in mind at what time, under what conditions, Lord Byron brought England to his feet with a single unfinished effort. In that spring of 1812 Napoleon was preparing to set out for Moscow. If he came back from Russia victorious as was his wont, assuredly, unless all signs failed, his next move would be against England, already on the verge of a nasty second struggle with her erstwhile colonies in America, and obliged to garrison as many troops as she could spare to help resist the depredations of the Bonaparte in Europe.

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To say that apprehension reigned in Britain is to put it mildly ; terror was there bordering on panic, and the air was full of wild alarms.

In the midst of all this what was Britain's great galaxy of poets doing? Scott was, in the language of Professor Minto,

“celebrating the exploits of William of Deloraine and Marmion. Coleridge's *Christabel* was lying in manuscript. His poetic power was, as he said himself, ‘in a state of suspended animation.’ Southey was floundering in the dim sea of Hindu mythology. Rogers was content with his *Pleasures of Memory*. Wordsworth took a certain meditative interest in public affairs, but his poems, ‘dedicated to liberty,’ though fine as compositions, have not the fire and sinew, the ardent directness of popular verse. In the earlier stages of the war Campbell had electrified the country with his heart-stirring songs ; but in 1812 he had retired from the post of Tyrtæus to become the poet of *Gertrude of Wyoming*. Moore confined himself to political squibs and wanton little lays for the boudoir. It was no wonder that, when at last a poet did appear whose im-

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pulses were not merely literary, who felt in what century he was living, whose artistic creations were throbbing with the life of his own age, a crowd at once gathered to hear the new singer."

In our own day we have seen very nearly a repetition of the occurrence in the case of Rudyard Kipling. No merely literary fame could be so universal as theirs, for the instincts of literary appreciation are not so universally cultured nor so universally akin; but the patriot passions need no cultivation, and they are of a kind in all men; a call to them means a call to the greatest number of human beings comprehensible within one general interest, love and religion by no means excepted. Byron sounded that clarion call in an hour of panic, not national merely, but European. The menace of the Bonaparte destroyer was over every land, save those where the menace had ceased to threaten and become a tyrannical certainty. All over Europe the ringing

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measures of the young poet found an echo in thousands of hearts ; his battle-cry of freedom, his apotheosis of heroism, his vivid presentation of glories worth fighting for, leaped from watch-tower to watch-tower of war-ridden Europe like the victory-fires of the Greeks circling the Ægean long ago. At twenty-five the lord of Newstead's impoverished acres and crumbling halls was on the very pinnacle of human fame. In the interval between the completion of *Childe Harold* and its issue from the press, Lord Byron took his seat in the house of peers and made a name for himself by several brilliant speeches, but with the unprecedented furore over *Childe Harold*, parliamentary ambitions paled, and an ardor of poetical composition took possession of the new hero.

But notwithstanding that a pinnacle is a comfortless resting-place, it is an in-born human tendency, having elevated a

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man thereto, to seek to drag him thence again. The French are not the only volatile populace, as no one in any generation, least of all in this our own, needs to be reminded. Poor Byron was no sooner up than there were a thousand furtive efforts to pull him down, or at least to make his pinnacle not uncomfortable merely, but absolutely untenable. It is an unforgivable thing to be a lord of ancient Norman lineage, twenty-five, brilliant, beautiful, fascinating, with the world at your feet. You may be a great poet and welcome, if only you have the grace to be old and ugly and surly and unlikeable except in your verses; if your dear public can half admire and wholly pity you, and say, "Poor devil! he deserves his little inning of fame," you may nurse your success quietly in your corner and none grudge you it very bitterly. But to have a brow like Apollo, a most noble head crowned with soft auburn curls,

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great eyes, now steely gray, now blue as fringed gentians or the waters of Naples Bay, a mouth of exceeding beauty and expressiveness, played about by a thousand shades of sensibility ; to radiate charm without trying to, and to engage devotion simply by force of your own adorableness,—these are high crimes against all whose brows are not Grecian, whose hair is not curly, and whose manifold virtues do privately bless the few, but fail to bewitch the many.

Lord Byron was soon discovered (and without the aid of a microscope, to be sure) to have quiet vices offsetting his noisy charms ; in fact, to be a renegade and a rascal, a libertine and a Whig ! Granted, he had been all of these quite as much (if not more) before his accession to fame than after, but with less offence, because he was less elevated and less praised. Now it must be the duty of every Englishman who loved

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humility to give him due cause therefor ; one need not mention names to call to mind parallel instances in our own day. So it was published that the much-lauded author of *Childe Harold*, in describing that dissolute and cynical young nobleman, had described himself. Wherefore, cease your praise, ye nations, and the rather mourn that a man so young could be so base !

The utter folly of this attempted identification of author with his hero can only briefly be touched on here. The fallacy always has existed in the popular mind, probably always will, that authors can write with vivid truthfulness only of what they have personally experienced ; whereas it is true that, with some exceptions, it is the events of a man's own life, the stages of his own soul, whereon he has least perspective, and so, from being unable to get outside of them for a view-point, least dexterity in handling. It has, moreover, become proverbial in

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the literary world that what time an author seeks to transcribe a "true story," he usually, from the limitations on his knowledge of motives and purposes, achieves something less essentially true than when, out of his knowledge of abstract truth, he constructs a typically true concretion. But the reading world will not be made to believe this; the other tenet is so much more interesting. It was "interesting" to believe that Lord Byron had portrayed himself in the cynical young nobleman, Childe Harold. How any one can carefully read the poem and give this silly idea credence is hard to understand. It is as if, says Countess Guiccioli, in her spirited defence of her poet, one should say that Goethe portrayed himself in Mephistopheles, or Milton portrayed himself in Satan, or Shakespeare drew his own picture in Iago. Byron made the mistake (from a politic point of view) of picturing Childe Harold a young lord of

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just such circumstances as his own, but deadened to joy by cynicism and immorality ; it was as if he conceived the idea of taking through many varied scenes two beings, circumstanced alike in outer fortune, but one, Harold, such as too many young men he knew who travelled the countries of earth in an *ennuied* pursuit of licentious diversion rather than in any noble sympathy with the beauties and sufferings encountered ; and the other, akin to himself, in whom the wrongs of men bred such fierce anger and the beauties of the world excited such reverent awe. The cruelty of being identified with the creature of his own scorn was in the extremest degree exasperating to the high-strung poet, who had unfortunately made it possible for many grievous things to be said about him, less by what he had actually done (though he had all the fashionable vices and follies of his age and of all ages of idle young men of rank)

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than by what, with a peculiar boastfulness, he was continually laying claim to having committed.

It was an age when young gentlemen of quality had but one ambition, in their school and salad days and, all too often, long thereafter, and it was to be, and to be considered, "bold, bad men." Byron had this ambition in common with his fellows, but he had others also; in his better self, wherein he differed from the youths of his acquaintance, he knew that such idle swagger was unworthy of him. But how explain, to any one who has not learned the phase of human nature in his own experience with men, how a fine nature can be ashamed of its fineness, and how natural it is for us all to wish to be estimated for the qualities we do not have! Who has not known a peaceable man who loved to brag loudly of his prowess in fight? a shy man who loved to give the impression of being bold under some circumstances? a

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generous soul, open-handed unto prodigality, who rejoiced to tell of some trans-action wherein he had been shrewder than kind?

Byron was not, but aspired to be considered, a man of fashion; to the day of his death, Trelawney says, there was no surer way to flatter him than so to approach him, appearing to forget that he was a poet. We all have our little vanities; those of us who are ordinary like to be considered singular; they who are extraordinary like to make it seem that they, at least, regard themselves as quite in the ordinary. Byron was a moody, super-sensitive man ill-calculated for a beau; therefore, a beau he aspired to be. And the beaus of his day bragged of their misdeeds, wherefore Byron bragged of his louder than any one else; it was the fashion to be cynical, or to seem so, and Byron affected the supremest cynicism. Perhaps it was because he realized that the

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only way to maintain individuality inviolate is to conform outwardly to type, and that only fools wear hearts on sleeves for daws to peck at ; but in his particular instance, conformity, while it may have saved him some of the sufferings poor Shelley's nonconformity brought on him, as surely laid the foundations of permanent sorrow and misunderstanding for Byron, whose career can in no wise be estimated unless one has some appreciation of his type and the sufferings inevitable to it.

The immediate first fruits of his success with *Childe Harold* included his lionization by high society in London, always on the lookout for fresh celebrities to exhibit at what Aurora Leigh called its "zoological soirees ;" it was no detriment to him, in society's eyes, that he began to be accredited a rascal, for there were few in society who lived in houses that were not glass ; and on the other hand, it was a welcome sensation

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at the warm, lazy end of a London season, to meet a beautiful young lord said to be a poet and a misanthrope through a crushing heart sorrow. Women, old and young, flocked 'round him in distracting numbers, and so overwhelmed him with evidences of unsought adoration that it was small wonder he made mortal enemies among the men. But down the bewildering gauntlet of the London feminine world Lord Byron moved with unconcern, invulnerable. Always a gallant, or aspiring to be, he had many light o' loves, many a graceful flirtation, and many a graceless debauch; but no woman could flatter herself that his love was hers even for a day, for somewhere in the Orient was a girl's grave, and therein lay all that was left to earth of her whom he immortalized under the name of Thyrza. This girl died in 1811,—where, how, or at what age, we do not know, probably never shall. “Her dear sacred name”

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Byron said he wished to "rest ever unrevealed," nor could any questioning, however tender, extract it from him. But he admitted that over and over again, always in terms of the most impassioned love, she is pictured in the heroines of his poems, and that she it was who taught him, somewhere in the foreign lands of his first journeyings, what love may be. Always, in poor Thyrza's name, he scoffed at the cheap and easy amours of his gay, dissolute friends, and always, in her dear name, he paid tribute to love which was mightily steadfast, tenderly true. She taught him in his wild, free youth what love could be, in its unselfishness, its unswervingness, its utter devotion ; later, when he was a world-weary man, another woman taught him also what love may be, and what she taught him did not uproot the teachings of sweet, sad young Thyrza, but supplemented them, as the solid, faithful companionship of

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mature years may realize the same love-dream kindled in youth by youth's sweet vows of fealty. But Thyrza taught him the happiness of loyal loving, and like one who has tasted of some divine nectar which makes all other drinks seem cheap and poor by comparison, he was ever thenceforth seeking to taste it again, sipping here and sipping there, and turning away wearily disgusted. The vain, idle, silly women of the London social world, throwing themselves at his feet, not because he was he, but because he was the chance idol of the hour, sickened him to the very soul, and after somewhat more than two years of their society he was grown so much a misanthrope that his friends took alarm and conceived the idea that in marriage lay his salvation. Perhaps it might have lain there, had not marriage, for him, proved such a travesty of all that he had ever hoped it would be. More than willing to believe that his capacity for exquisite romantic at-

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tachment lay buried with poor Thyrza, he was not averse, however, to marriage on the substantial, kindly-affectioned basis common among persons of rank, who early learn that the matrimonial contract may be full of material benefits without necessary absence of decent compatibility and even fond good-fellowship. He was poor in purse, with a sadly impoverished, but very venerable estate ; if a wife could be found for him who, for his name and fame, and his not inconsiderable personal attractions, would bring him a tidy fortune and an amiable intent to make him happy, he was more than willing to find in her as many charms and virtues as she showed the slightest inclination to possess, and to do his part towards making the marriage one of those really ideal ones which marriages in high life, made for motives of good policy, occasionally turn out to be.

Accordingly, his attention having been

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directed to a certain Miss Milbanke, a learned young person of good family and heiress to a large fortune, he sought the young woman's acquaintance, and after a decent interval made a formal proposal for her hand. It was declined, and Lord Byron was no whit cast down thereby ; if not Miss Milbanke, why, then, some other ! It was really quite immaterial to him. When pressed by his friends, in September, 1814, to make an immediate choice, he named a lady whom he would best like, of all his acquaintance, for his Lady Byron. Probably because he was so honest as to make it no secret that he was marrying "from reason rather than choice," this lady declined his offer, which was regrettable, for Moore says she was of all persons the one to make him a good wife, having "a delicate generosity of spirit, a feminine high-mindedness, which would have led her to tolerate the defects of her husband in consideration of his noble qualities and his glory, and even to

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sacrifice silently her own happiness rather than violate the responsibility in which she stood pledged to the world for his." Urged, on this second refusal, to renew his suit for Miss Milbanke, Byron complied, saying, "let me be married out of hand. I don't care to whom, so it amuses anybody else, and don't interfere with me much in the daytime." And this time, in spite of his candor, Miss Milbanke was willing, and they were married, January 2, 1815, going, after a brief honeymoon, during the course of which the excellent Lady Byron inquired of her lord when he proposed to "give up versifying," to visit the bride's parents, eminently respectable and pre-eminently dull old people, who conceived no possible standards of excellence apart from that exemplified in the person and character of their only child. The new Lady Byron's reputation for saintliness and learning reached, indeed, far beyond the confines of her own household ; she was

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a neighborhood patron saint, and in London was held, without liking but with boundless respect, a model of modest virtues and proprieties. Her fortune, however, was not *in esse*, but *in posse*, until the death of her uncle, whose heiress she was, and in the meantime she was, so far from being a material aid to Lord Byron, a very sad drain on his scant means. Her tastes were commensurate with her prospects and not at all with her circumstances, and it never entered her wise and virtuous mind to adapt her requirements to what her husband was able to provide. In consequence, Byron's marriage with a rich heiress, instead of helping him out of a hole, dragged him deeper in, and nine times in the brief year of his wedded life the bailiffs were in possession of his house.

But these things, notwithstanding his horror of debt, were the least of his troubles, for, all money considerations apart, if there was one woman in Great

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Britain whom, more than all others, George Noel Gordon, Lord Byron, should NOT have married, that woman was Anna Isabella Milbanke. And as for her, if his fame and his beauty induced her,—virtuous lady!—to marry a thoroughly reputed rake, she had her sorry reward, and although she excited full and plenty sympathy in her own time, it has been hard in later times, even allowing Byron all the vices she laid at his door, for any one to justify her peculiar treatment of them. Granted that the poet was a hard man to live with; that he owed to his father an accumulation of debts and a tendency to the most vicious living, and to his mother an undisciplined nature,—her alternations of fierce tenderness and lazy laxity or irascible assault making it impossible that she should require of her boy a self-control and standard of behavior she herself could not command,—and that his poetic temperament entailed all the moodiness,

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inclining to melancholy, all the necessary instinct for self-indulgence that accomplices must have (and by their judicious use of which we must judge them, more than by any other one thing), there was really nothing in the man that Love might not have coped with successfully ; indeed, another woman, who *did* love him, has left the world a most voluminous record of him which, if the world could quite believe it, as it would like to, would prove Byron the most splendidly faultless character that ever traversed this vale of tears. If Lady Byron ever loved her husband, we have no least evidence of it ; her sorrow in their luckless union having all the appearance of wounded pride and none of the appearance of wounded loving. Perhaps it is as idle to blame her, and as unjust, as to blame any one for having blue eyes when all our preference runs to brown. She was a very, very virtuous lady, —an almost or altogether obnoxiously virtuous lady ; she had been a good little

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girl, and partly because she was pious, partly because she was an heiress, had been praised for her goodness until, without realizing it perhaps, she had come into an habitual frame of mind, regarding herself, like that of the Pharisee's, thanking God devoutly that she was not like other women, not to mention like bold, bad men. When Lord Byron's conduct did not suit her (and there can be no denying that some of his doings were very vexatious) instead of resenting it, like a very human woman, or pardoning it, like a very loving one, she treated it with sweetly pious horror which seemed to, nay, which *did* say, louder than words, "See how good I am ! Why can't you be like me ?" Now, a termagant is not pleasant, but one may easily and safely venture the assertion that he who has successively tried the termagant and the woman of Lady Byron's type, will always, if the chance be given him, go back to the termagant with a thankful heart and

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a revived self-esteem. A prominent literary man of our own day once remarked in confidence to a friend that if Providence ever called him to endure a wife who regularly went raving mad and broke up the furniture, he would try to act the man under this affliction, but if he ever found himself called on to cope with the feminine "martyr," he would desert, without waiting for argument. Lord Byron, of all men who ever lived the least fitted for it, found himself, with his impetuous disposition, married to one of the most martyr-meek women that ever drove a man to the brink of distraction, or over it. Every word, look, and tone of the woman he had made Lady Byron was nicely calculated to make him feel a brute, and making a man feel himself a brute has always been the surest way to make him act one.

In December, of the year of his marriage, a daughter was born to Lord Byron, and when the baby was old

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enough to be taken on a journey her mother set out with her for a visit to her parents. The parting from Lord Byron was affectionate enough, as Lady Byron conceived affectionateness, and after she left she wrote him one quite playful and fond letter; then, on a sudden, like a bolt out of a clear sky, came a belligerent announcement from Sir Ralph Milbanke that his daughter declined to return to Lord Byron, also, to give any reason therefor. And return to him she never did, from that day, nor did she ever deign to state why, preferring, after the fashion of martyr-ladies, to remain meekly silent and allow the world to think the worst things possible, which, no matter how dark the truth, are always darker than it, more mysteriously dreadful. Byron pleaded with his wife to state her grievance, but in vain; she declared him, privately, either insane, and therefore unfit to live with, or, if not insane, insensate, and the more unfit for her society.

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But no specific charges would the lady make, no extenuation would she hear, no counsel looking towards compromise and peace would she take. And from the day he parted from her and his little Ada, in all apparent affection, Byron saw mother and child no more forever. It is strange that public opinion at the time should have sided with Lady Byron, no matter what her reputation for virtue and her husband's reputation for vice, for if there is a cowardly, mean, despicable thing a woman can do, especially a woman who is espoused to a public man, it is to withdraw from him in sanctimonious dudgeon leaving unnamed charges hanging over his head. Lady Byron may have considered her demeanor dignified, her silence charitably golden, but it is to be feared, rather, that she was shrewd enough to know how much more sympathy the unconsidering British public would give to suffering silence than to noisy accusation. It suited her part

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to be meek, and say nothing ; it was all of a piece with her hideous martyrdom during the months of her married life ; and it suited the British public to pity her, to make her the means wherewith to turn and rend its idol, so that it reminded Lord Macaulay of “ the wanton enchantress in the Arabian Tales, who, when the forty days of her fondness were over, was not content with dismissing her lovers, but condemned them to expiate, in loathsome shapes, and under cruel penances, the crime of having once pleased her too well.” Lord Byron had been guilty of the offence which, of all offences, Macaulay goes on to say, is punished most severely,—he had been overpraised. And in consequence thereof, when the woman who had taken into her keeping in the most sacredly responsible way, the private name and fame of a great public man, chose to expose him to world-wide and time-long shame, Macaulay says :

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“The obloquy which Byron had to endure was such as might well have shaken a more constant mind. The newspapers were filled with lampoons. The theatres shook with execrations. He was excluded from circles where he had lately been the observed of all observers. All those creeping things that riot in the decay of nobler natures hastened to their repast; and they were right; they did after their kind. It is not every day that the savage envy of aspiring dunces is gratified by the agonies of such a spirit, and the degradation of such a name. The unhappy man left his country forever. The howl of contumely followed him across the sea, up the Rhine, over the Alps; it gradually waxed fainter; it died away; and those who had raised it began to ask each other, what, after all, was the matter about which they had been so clamorous, and wished to invite back the criminal whom they had just chased from them. His poetry became more popular than it had ever been; and his complaints were read with tears by thousands and tens of thousands who had never seen his face.”

Although, from the very first that fame smiled on him in his adolescence, women had thrown themselves at Lord

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Byron's head, some in maudlin passion over his witching beauty, others in a calmer but no less ardent spell by reason of his fascinations of mind and manner, it is for the most part recorded of him that he refused to take any advantage of these opportunities for gallantry or villainy, as the case might be. For one thing, Byron was too epicurean in his emotions to care for anything that came cheap, and always he was one of those essentially masculine men who prefer to do the bulk of the loving and to keep it contingent on their own initiative. For another thing, the son of that rake-hell, Captain Jack Byron, despoiler of homes and seducer of women, was no conscienceless scapegrace like his father and owned no vanity of the kind that thrives on the overthrow of good, if foolish, women.

But one day, during the latter part of his troubled year of married life, there came to Byron, who was one of

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the managers of the Drury Lane Theatre, a young woman seeking an engagement on the stage. She was that Jane (or Claire, as she preferred to call herself, after the manner of silly young women enamored of the stage) Clairmont, whose mother had married William Godwin and, in the capacity of step-mother to poor Mary, the daughter of Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, had made that young thing doubly glad to flee to England, a year or so before, with the "atheist poet," Percy Shelley. Jane had assisted in this flight,—indeed had participated in it (poor Shelley had a fatality for sisters-in-law !) and was now on one of her periodical absences from the Shelleys' care, which absences alone fortified the unhappy poet and his wife against the dread hour of her return. She was a pretty, brainless, more than half-unbalanced young thing, this Claire Clairmont, belonging beyond the pale of society both by reason of her birth

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and breeding and by reason of her recklessness of its laws and requirements. What Byron ever saw in her to hold captive even a light and passing fancy is more than one can well imagine, but she was infatuated with him, and in the hour of his abject agony of final separation from England and all that it held for him, this frail creature seems to have stood in the breach with such sympathy as she could command, and with that better than all sympathy, admiration, and in consequence it was to her Byron went on quitting his country in the early part of 1816, and with her he lived on the Continent for some time, usually in the company of the Shelleys. In 1817 a child was born to Lord Byron and Jane Clairmont, a daughter,—that Allegra whom he loved with such passionate tenderness, lavishing on her all the paternal ideality which Lady Byron's wanton caprice denied him the opportunity of lavishing on his little Ada. Allegra's

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mother soon became unbearable to Lord Byron, as she did to every one sooner or later, and her infatuation for him seems to have waned even as did his toleration of her, but the child Byron hugged to his heart with almost fierce devotion, laying a multitude of plans for her education, even for her marriage, and providing for her immediate wants with a lavish generosity. Her death from Roman fever, at the age of five years, afflicted Byron so sorely that for a time his reason was despaired of; but fate was kind to the beautiful, elfish, imperious little Allegra, in taking her from a harsh world before she had tasted of its scorn. Shelley left this picture of her in his poem, "Julian and Maddalo,"—Count Maddalo being Shelley's portrait of Lord Byron :

"A lovelier toy sweet Nature never made ;  
A serious, subtle, wild, yet gentle being ;  
Graceful without design, and unforeseeing.

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With eyes—Oh ! speak not of her eyes ! which  
seem

Twin mirrors of Italian Heaven, yet gleam  
With such deep meaning as we never see  
But in the human countenance."

Tormented by Claire's hysterics and sulky fits, Byron left her, in the year of Allegra's birth, and went to Venice, where, in a mood of desperation, the bitterest and most reckless he ever knew, he plunged into dissipation of the least lovely sort ; and here, some time during the year 1819, in one of his excursions into high society, wherewith he varied his vulgar orgies among the lowly born, he met the woman who was to become more to him than any woman had ever been,—the Countess Guiccioli. She was a very beautiful and highly accomplished young woman who had been married, while very young, to an aged nobleman past threescore ; it was a marriage of policy, of the most wretched sort, and it was into a very dreary life, in-

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capable of content with what satisfied the women of her class and full of wistfulness for intellectual companionship, that the English milord came, with his dazzling beauty which thrilled even unpoetic men with its unforgettable splendor, and his cloak of melancholy which he wore even in his pleasures. Italian women of her rank all had their gallants ; the *cavaliere servente* was as established a part of the high class marriage as the husband himself, and a woman who did not conform to the custom simply laid herself open to the implication of unattractiveness. Countess Guiccioli found little to interest her in the cavaliers of her women friends, with their idle flatteries and vaporish conversations ; the English milord, however, was a man after her own heart, she, very evidently, was a woman after his, and the count, absorbed in his own affairs, of the heart and otherwise, had no slightest objection, so an intimacy sprang up between the

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poet and the noble lady, which afforded him the supremest satisfaction of his life. She was admirably, if not quite perfectly, adapted to him, and she gave him no light, capricious affection, but a deep, true, tender, idolizing, and idealizing love, which saw in him no guile or fault of any kind, only perfections and charms such as never man had before ; and sustained, cheered, comforted by this, Lord Byron abandoned his dissipation, and went to work with a will. The rest of his life, up to the time of his going to Greece, was prodigiously productive, and, compared with the years preceding it, rather humdrum. True, an even fairly detailed record of these years would fill a volume, but in Byron's eventful life they were, of all years since his boyhood, the least eventful. The death of Allegra, the drowning of Shelley, the failure of his cherished plan to establish a critical review, and the storm of public opinion over *Don*

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*Juan*, were among the events of these years, which included a restless itinerary from place to place in Italy ; but for the most part Byron lived a very quiet, almost domesticated life, studying and writing with infinite zeal and narrowing the circle of his friendships to a very few. In spite, however, of the quiet tenor of his life and the satisfaction he felt in the devotion of the Countess Guiccioli, in spite, too, of the ever-increasing fame of his literary labors, Byron was not happy. The eternal restlessness that made him the great poet of unrest was not to be balked by happy fortune. In the spring of 1823 Byron was living at Genoa. In Greece, best loved by him of all lands, men were fighting a bitter fight for freedom from the unspeakable Turk, and to Lord Byron who had done so much to celebrate Greece's beauties and glories, came an appeal to be a member of a London Greek Committee, seeking to

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render aid to the struggling patriots. Fired by the knowledge thus brought to his attention, Byron at once raised fifty thousand crowns, bought an English brig, loaded her with arms and ammunition, and set sail, in July, 1823, to carry both practical and spiritual encouragement to the brave fighters for liberty. There, many discouragements awaited him,—too well known to need detailing here,—and in April, 1824, he fell a prey to fever, dying on Easter Sunday, in Missolonghi, just as he was about to proceed, as commander-in-chief, on an expedition against Lepanto. He died, but the tears Europe shed over his untimely bier stirred the people of many nations to sympathy with Greece, and her independence, which would doubtless have come to pass in any event, by reason of the indomitable bravery of her people, was probably, if not certainly, hastened by the intervention of nations quickened

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by the pathetic sacrifice of poor Byron's life.

And thus it vanished from view, that most brilliantly meteoric life that ever flashed across the literary horizon.

"I have not loved the world," says Childe Harold, "nor the world me ;

I have not flattered its rank breath, nor bowed  
To its idolatries a patient knee,—

Nor coined my cheek to smiles,—nor cried  
aloud

In worship of an echo : in the crowd  
They could not deem me one of such ; I stood  
Among them but not of them, in a shroud  
Of thoughts which were not their thoughts."

Beautiful, extraordinarily talented, titled, rich (for after he left England and consented to the sale of Newstead, the proceeds thereof supplemented by the princely earnings of his pen, made him rich far, far beyond even his capacity to spend), possessed of a thousand charms and graces, the darling of that fickle jade Fortune, Byron might well have made

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Childe Harold's parting lament his own, too. He was one of those men whom fate makes, every now and then, an exemplification of this world's futility, crowding them with dazzling favors only to make it loudly evident that "all is vanity." He lacked only a throne to make him quite of kin to that brilliant young *roué*, King Solomon of Judea. Like that wisest and most foolish man that ever lived, he had tested the vanity of every human thing, but great as came to be his disillusion touching things real, there never died in him the most soaring idealism touching things that are to be, —here, in a better age of humankind, and Beyond, in an Everlasting best of all.

He died murmuring the name of that child whom, since her earliest infancy, he had not seen, but who, when she was come to years of discretion, loved his dear memory with an utter ideality. He died believing that the world had ceased

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to love him ; but even as Macaulay said, his sorrows have brought tears to the eyes of tens of thousands who never saw his face.

On the day that news came to him of Thyrza's death he wrote :

“ On earth thy love was such to me ;  
It fain would form my hope in Heaven.”

And if, as we are at perfect liberty to suspect, Thyrza was that Maid of Athens his parting address to whom has thrilled the world for ninety-odd years, perhaps it was because Greece was *her* Greece that he was so glad to die for it, as he intimated he would be, in his last lines, written on his thirty-sixth birthday, at Missolonghi, where he died. One likes to think it was for love of sweet Thyrza he went back to fight for her country's independence, and that when he fell there it was sweet Thyrza who was first to welcome and reward him when he reached the Otherwhere.

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GEORGE SAND,—A TALE OF QUEST  
AND CONQUEST

HERE is but one story, after all. It begins with our childish quest for the pot of gold, where the rainbow springs from the ground, and it ends,—well, sometimes it ends soon, sometimes late, but always it tends hitherto: Whoso loveth his life shall lose it; not in seeking but in sacrifice is joy. There are variants of the story, because one imagines happiness to be gold, and one believes it to be love, and another fancies it to be glory; but all find it to be duty, and duty to be renunciation.

This is the story of a woman who believed that love is the law of life,—which it is! But because of many reasons she had a defective vision of love and was

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forever following some will-o'-the-wisp that she took for glint of the glory on Transfiguration Mount. As jack-o'-lanterns do most hover over bogs, her feet were many times ensnared, but she was dauntless in spirit and ever struggled free again, returning to staunch ground with renewed keenness for her enterprise.

It is too common to put a ban on George Sand's life as a subject for discussion. True, her mistakes, or misdemeanors, call them which you will, are not of a kind one likes to condone; they are blemishes on her character, but as One said, long ago, who is without blemish let him cast the first stone. And like the blemishes in many a great character, they point the way to an understanding of it much more clearly than its virtues do. God set the standard for biographers, and He knew that neither for the glory of the man himself nor for his helpfulness to others was any record

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worth making of him that did not tell how many times he slipped and fell for every time he gained a foot on the ascent,—how much he resisted when he conquered. Even latter-day legislative bodies compute the rewards of heroism by whether the conqueror met a superior or an inferior force, and the world holds it greater glory to have fallen at the pass of Thermopylæ than to have been Santa Anna at Alamo.

Amantine Lucile Aurore Dupin, destined to be known as George Sand, the most brilliantly gifted of all France's brilliant daughters, the greatest woman writer, perhaps, the world has ever known, was born with the odds heavy against her as a woman, and heavy in her favor as a literary artist. She was born in Paris in 1804, the year when Napoleon's star reached the imperial zenith and he crowned himself with much pomp at Notre Dame. Her father, who died when she was very young, was a

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son of a French noble whose wife was a natural daughter of Maurice Count of Saxony and Marshal-General of France. Previous to her marriage with Dupin, this Marie Aurore de Saxe had been married to a very aged gentleman, the Count of Horn, one of the innumerable illegitimate sons of Louis XV., so that the woman who was to have, more than any other, a ruling influence over the life of George Sand, was not only herself of illegitimate strain (her father, whose sister was the mother of Louis XVI., being a natural son of Augustus II., Elector of Saxony and King of Poland), but was by her first marriage allied with another strain of the same sort. Her son, Maurice, barely escaped adding to the family ignominy in that line by marrying, just before his daughter's birth, the woman, Antoinette Delaborde, of lowliest birth and badly tarnished reputation, with whom, in spite of her seniority and her family of illegitimate children, he had

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become enamored in Paris. Without doubt, the widowed mother of Maurice Dupin would have prevented the scandalous marriage if she could ; in which event, who can say what would have become of the daughter of Antoinette Delaborde? As it was, her father being killed by a fall from his horse when she was but four years old, the little Aurore was taken by her mother to the home of her father's mother at Nohant, and there brought up as the heiress of her aristocratic old grandame.

Then began in the little maid, born of the gilded vice of the courts and the common vice of the Parisian grisettes, a most amazing education. The Countess, her grandmother, was an ardent disciple of Voltaire in matters of religion, or irreligion, and of Rousseau in theories of education and social order. She denied the child mystery, refused her any opportunity for faith, and rigorously administered to her Spartan doses of litera-

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ture and history which she was in nowise able to understand. With all this she taught her many of the virtues of the high-born and high-bred, inculcating an aristocratic strain in her which proved, afterwards, of incalculable worth to the literary artist whose strength lay largely in her accurate knowledge of many kinds of life, high and low. The low, one may in a measure gain by bending to its understanding, but the peculiar mental and moral qualities of *le haut monde* one may not come to know well by scaling ladders and peering over hedges.

Offsetting the royal and aristocratic strain of the Dupins, however, was the blood of the Delabordes; Antoinette Delaborde's father peddled birds on the Quai aux Oiseaux and sold liquor to the poor, somewhere in an obscure corner of Revolutionary Paris. If he had a wife, we hear nothing of her; more than probably Antoinette was a child of chance, just as were her own first two children,

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and as her celebrated daughter came near being. Now, this Antoinette was a warm-hearted, simple-natured woman, of violent temper but generous impulses and opulent faith. She believed in the miraculous, all that her Catholic faith inspired and beyond that, to any extent to which her imagination or the imagination of others might lead her; and for this, no less than for her warmth, she was exceedingly dear to her child who found the cold, formal rectitude of her grandmother very admirable but very chilling. So under the tutelage of one woman the girl was brought up in the most refined scepticism and eclectic philosophical systems that ever shackled young genius in its growing days, and under the tutelage of the other she was encouraged to intimacy with the peasant children (to which intimacy she owed an enormous debt, later in her life) and in the liveliest uses of her imagination and love of the miraculous. It was an excellently dual

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training for her in some respects, but in others it was regrettable, for the two women were always at war about her, and the child lived between the fire of her mother's tempestuous temper and her grandmother's icy disdain. It is not to be wondered at if, between this aristocratic allegiance to Voltaire and that abundant belief but lax precept of the ardent Paris waif, the girl got no real foundation of moral principle, no sturdy ability to know right from wrong, and no ingrained habit of doing the right, at whatever cost. In those of us of Puritan blood, there are certain sins abhorrence of which is so transmitted to us in our blood and fostered in us by every phase of our training, that to transgress in those particular lines calls not so much for weakness as for strength, strength to overcome all the power of heredity and habit and education. On the other hand, we are born and educated, so to speak, to other sins which, on that ac-

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count, we commit much more easily than we resist them. We are born and trained, many of us, to a certain amount and kind of insincerity, to certain depravities of the financial conscience, to backbiting and over-indulgence, in dress or drink or at dinner, to nervous irritability and to other things which make it a matter of tragedy to our kin that human beings are called to live together in families. We don't condone any of these things. Oh, dear no! But our parents did them before us, everyone about us does them, all the circumstances of our lives lead us easily into them, nay, make it almost impossible for us to keep out of them. They're not pretty, no! But things being as they are, what can you expect? That's what we say, to ourselves,—eh?

Well, here was an intense little creature, growing up to womanhood in a time when the status of woman in France was little, if any, above degradation, and, passionately hungry for human love and

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human sympathy, finding herself a forlorn little morsel between two contending women, both of whom she loved ardently, not so much for what they were as for what she was, measuring out to them, in the world-old way, not according to the measure of their deserts, but according to the measure of her bounty. And because, out of this bounty, she would not, could not, deny her mother a measure of love not merely filial but ardently sympathetic, the old countess separated mother and child, sending the former back to Paris, and trying to assuage the grief of the little Aurore by telling her tales of her mother's commonness and inveighing against her worthiness to be loved. This, as might have been expected, only made the child's devotion to her mother the more intense, and chilled into something still more distantly respectful her regard for the countess, her grandmother. The girl, so treated, began to mope and pine, and at last, in

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desperation, was placed in a fashionable convent school where she spent four years to which she afterwards looked back as the happiest and most peaceful of her life. While she was there the countess died, leaving Aurore her sole heir, and from the convent school-room, almost direct, the girl of seventeen was hastily married, to the first eligible obtainable, to thwart her desires in the matter of taking the veil and prolonging to the end the quiet happiness of her convent years.

When it became a fixed idea with her mother to get the girl married without delay, the first personable young man who happened to present himself was one, Casimir Dudevant, the illegitimate son of a colonel in the French army, whom Napoleon, in recognition of his services, had created a baron of the empire. The mother of Casimir was a Spaniard, and through his father he was related to John Law, of "Mississippi



GEORGE SAND (MADAME DUDEVANT)

From the engraving by Calamatta



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Bubble" fame, or shame. Young Dudevant, whose father had no legitimate heir, and whose prospects of inheriting the Dudevant fortune were exceedingly good, seems to have been genuinely attracted towards the girl from the first, although her 600,000 francs may have been more than a little in her favor in his eyes. They were married in 1822, when Aurore was just eighteen and her husband ten years older, and on their marriage went to live at the home of the bride, at Nohant. By French law, this home and all her fortune passed from her control into his, when she married, and the stranger assumed the reins of government in the home where Aurore had grown up. At once the young couple settled into the ordinary life of the country squire and his wife, and while Casimir attended to the farming on his new estate, rode to hounds, and ate and drank and gamed with his neighbors, little, eighteen-year-old Aurore sat at

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home, radiant, and waited the coming of her baby. He came in July, her own birth-month, 1823, and was named Maurice, for her beloved father. The lonely little girl-mother had need of her baby, even other than to satisfy the yearnings of her maternal passion, for about that time her husband's neglect of her became marked to the degree where she could no longer be blind to the fact that she was an unloved wife who might find her solace where she could, but would certainly never find it in her husband.

And where there is an ecstasy of welcome for the little one who comes to a home blessed with a great love between its two heads, there is a passion almost or altogether fierce with which a woman hugs to her breast the babe to whom she whispers, "You must be all in all to poor mother, darling! You must be her lover and her comforter and her little son all in one." And when that mother is just nineteen and full of the

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most mature aversion for society in the mass and intense longing for it in one companion soul, there is tragedy in store for her, as sure as fate. It may be quiet tragedy, eating her heart out like a canker-sore, like a cruel worm in the bud half-blown ; or it may be turbulent tragedy, seeking amelioration at any cost, in any place. It is hard to say which of the two is less dreadful, the tragedy of passivity or the tragedy of turbulent resentment. For a while it looked as if Aurore Dudevant would join the great number of those women who, finding they have staked and lost in the great lottery of love, settle into a dull unhopingness, and occupy themselves with such affairs as belong to the routine of lives in their sphere, becoming gradually either apathetic or vixenish, according to the tendencies of their own natures. Six years after Maurice was born came a daughter to Aurore Dudevant. Nothing could promise less of a

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future novelist than the household into which the new baby came. Between Dudevant and his wife there was no community of interests except the yield of their land and the condition of their neighbors, save, of course, in their children, to whom he seems always to have been heartily attached, after his fashion of attachment. It was a prosperous, hospitable, kindly household, on a footing of great friendliness with its neighbors, poor and rich, and always more or less full of family guests on a longer or shorter stay. The master was absorbed in his crops, his hunts, his journeys to Paris and elsewhere, his gaming and drinking, and all the interests of a rather swinish country proprietor ; the mother was a woman of decided domestic gifts, capable, yielding, good-natured, deeply devoted to her children, and fond of all about her, from her servants to the family pets and her frequent guests from among her kindred and her husband's.

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Nohant was a typical household, in which, succeeding to a sharp disenchantment with life as youth dreams it, comes a fairly comfortable, amiable dog-trot of daily routine, the gait of thousands on thousands of people who, having failed of their dear desire, have given themselves over to the dull task of "making the best of a poor bargain," not in the spirit of him who conquers fate, but in the spirit of him who, for sheer inanition, gives fate the victory. The world is full of such homes, the streets are full of such people ; they are the "mass" of humanity, the unleavened lump from which the world gains nothing that is of the spirit. There is a resignation that is divine, and a lethargy that is little less than damnable ; it is difficult to differentiate the two in words, but every one knows the one from the other, infallibly, when he meets them. Nor is the divine resignation to be rated below an equally divine discontent, for some

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are called to prove themselves one way, some another. Not every woman who has been cheated out of her birthright of love can turn to the great world her energies and make her bane its blessing, but every woman who suffers can throw the weight of one life, one example, into either of two balances, into the balance with those who, having failed to find life sweet by gift of fortune, refuse to find it noble, in spite of fortune, or into the balance with those who, through having come to feel that life is hard for them, come to feel that it is hard, too, for the many, and, learning thus the great secret of gentle life, to be made angels of tenderness and compassion thereby. As George W. Cable recently put it, "It seems to me, that in every problem of moral conduct we confront; we really hold in trust an interest of all mankind. To solve that problem bravely and faithfully is to make life just so much easier for everybody, and to fail to do so

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is to make it just so much harder to solve by whoever has next to face it."

Aurore Dudevant faced a hard problem of moral conduct in those days when she sat by her babies and, peering wistfully ahead, as all mothers do when they hold their babies in their arms, tried to see herself and them in the future years. They were all that tied her to a life she loathed, a life grossly material, except for her motherhood, a life of crops and servants and country neighbors, of routine, which was her special detestation, of monotony, of daily association with a man who was not only bestial in himself, but cruel to her and brutally disrespectful. True, all that she had of worldly goods had passed into his control, but that was nothing; the wild, free spirit in her tugged for release, for liberty to live her own life in her own way, for freedom to leave the field of one defeat and seek for victory some otherwhere. She came of people who

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had made all bow to love, that great, impelling, dominating, irresistible something that governed the world, she believed, but that she had never known, save by hearsay ; the blood of kings who loved where beauty called, of a father who loved in spite of caste and in spite of filial duty, and of a mother who knew no law but the law of her own love-led desire, pulsed in the veins of this unloved Aurore ; all about her, from the birds to the peasants, nature sang a haunting melody of love, of life imperfect in one, complete in two. Always, as a child, when the domestic atmosphere grew thick and murky, and the clash of contending forces dinned in her tortured ears, the natural buoyancy and hope of youth made the sunlit plains of peace seem just ahead ; when the heart beats young it is impossible not to believe that at the edge of the next field,—always the next,—where the ground meets the sky, is the pot of gold at the end of the

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rainbow. But youth was so soon, so cruelly soon over for her, and hope died so early after the marriage feast. At twenty she was a sad little mother, hugging her baby passionately to her breast; at five-and-twenty, the very outer edge of womanly maturity, she sat and mused with her two children, balancing her intense mother-love with the cruelly intense cravings of her individual nature for freedom to give itself expression.

Ordinarily, in a woman so passionately maternal, the other call would not have triumphed; nature beautifully provides that mothers shall be capable of any sacrifice, which they need to be, God knows, in the high calling in which they serve her! But in Aurore Dudevant something more than the ordinary woman instincts struggled with the sacrificial passion of motherhood, and that something won. We would give a great deal—more, almost than for all her

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books—for a faithful record of that struggle, step by step, but that is just what, notwithstanding her voluminous autobiography and equally voluminous correspondence, she did not choose to leave us. She had a womanly dignity about reviling the man who was her husband and the father of her children, and an aristocratic scorn, perhaps we may call it, of sharing her troubles with any one; Antoinette Delaborde would have shrilled her troubles from the house-tops of Paris, but her daughter was also the daughter of kings and nobles, and the blood that went unflinchingly to the guillotine in her grandmother's time, went unfalteringly through disenchantment in the granddaughter's; whatever the inward tremors may have been, there was a calm front for the world to take note of. Perhaps she would have continued to endure her situation had not a circumstance, rather trifling in itself, tended to

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set all her previous discontent in a mould not to be gainsaid. Under date of December 3, 1830, she writes from Nohant to M. Jules Boucoiran, her son's tutor, at Paris :

"I must inform you that, in spite of my inertia, indifference, unsteadiness of purpose, the facility with which I forgive and forget sorrows and injury, I have taken a *rash and extreme resolution*. . . . You are acquainted with my home life, you are able to judge whether it is tolerable. You, scores of times, wondered how I could display so much courage and equanimity when my pride was being constantly crushed. But there is a limit to everything. Besides, the reasons which might have led me to take earlier the determination upon which I have now decided, were not strong enough to influence my resolution, previous to the fresh events which have just taken place. Nobody is aware of anything. There has been no scandal. While looking for something in my husband's desk, I simply found a parcel addressed to me. . . . It bore the inscription : *To be opened only at my death*. I could not find the patience to wait until I became a widow. With health like mine, I cannot expect to survive anyone."

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She opened the parcel, which was his last will and testament, of which she goes on to say to Boucoiran,—

“Good heavens! What a will! Curses for me and nothing else! . . . The perusal of that will has at last aroused me from my slumber. I said to myself that to live with a man who feels neither esteem for nor confidence in his wife, would be equivalent to trying to revive a corpse. My mind was made up and, I dare say so, *irrevocably*. You know that I am most careful in the use of that expression. Without delaying a single day, though weak and sickly still, I informed him of my decision and enumerated my motives for so acting, with a cold-blooded audacity which petrified him. He scarcely expected that a being like me could muster enough spirit and nerve to thwart his designs. He scolded, rebuked, entreated me. I remained unshakeable. I must have an alimony. I shall go to Paris, my children shall stay at Nohant. Such was the result of our first explanation. I pretended to be intractable on all points. It was mere feigning on my part, as you can easily fancy. I have no desire to forsake my children. . . . I intend spending part of the year, six months at

## A TALE OF QUEST AND CONQUEST

least, at Nohant with my children, and even my husband, whom this lesson will teach circumspection. Up to the present he has treated me as though I were hateful to him. Being assured of it, I go. Now, he cries over me ; that is his own fault ! I give him the proof that do I not wish to be borne as a burden, but sought for and hailed as a free companion, who will again share his roof only when he becomes worthy of her. Do not think me impertinent. Remember the humiliation which I have had to endure ! it lasted for eight years !”

All this she wrote to Boucoiran, her one confidant, because on him, on his willingness to abandon his studies in Paris and come back to Nohant to undertake the care of her son, her decision rested. “If you abandon me,” she concludes, “I shall have to bend and once more submit to him. Ah ! and how he would take advantage of me !” To his acceptance of the trust, the sacred trust, she made reply as follows :

“I will not shirk the gratitude for which I am indebted to you by considering your sacrifice as

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the fulfilment of a duty. I shall, all my life, look upon it as a proof of affection so great that I can never adequately acknowledge it."

In January, 1831, Madame Dudevant set out for Paris, where she installed herself in a poor garret in keeping with the pitifully meagre allowance made her, out of her own estate, by her husband. Here, in this great city, she essayed first one then another way of earning a livelihood, before settling on her pen as a means of support. She tried painting portraits, and, failing in that, decorating cigar-boxes. At last she decided that she wrote with more facility than she did anything else, and in this conviction entered into a literary partnership with her friend Jules Sandeau, a neighbor of hers at Nohant, in collaboration with whom she wrote a number of newspaper articles and finally a novel of very poor sort. In those days it would have created a scandal for a woman in *Aurore* Dudevant's position to affix her

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own name to a novel, and Sandeau had reasons, too, for not wishing to sign his, so the joint work was published under the name of Jules Sand. When, shortly afterwards, the partnership was broken up, Madame Dudevant retained, by common consent, the surname Sand, prefixing it with the name George, one of the most familiar baptismal names in her part of the country. With the publication of *Indiana*, in 1831, the name of George Sand was introduced to the French public, which instantly hailed the new author with acclaim. It was the day of Balzac, of Hugo, of Dumas, of Flaubert, when she wrote, the day of France's greatest literary effulgence, but she came unto her own with rapid strides, reaching a place where, to many minds, she seemed the first of her generation ; scarcely any one ventures to put her very far below the first.

Although fame came to her soon, and money rewards for her labors began to

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be quite gratifying, it was no enviable position that George Sand occupied, in those years immediately preceding her thirtieth birthday. She had outraged conventions by leaving her husband and her home; she had further outraged them by living alone, or at least apart from all her connections, in bohemian Paris, and pursuing a literary career; and most of all she had outraged them by her free-and-easy manner of life, by donning men's attire, to facilitate her going about Paris unnoticed, and by the tone of her novels, in which she set forth, with all the ardor of a young and suffering spirit, the indignities to womanhood which were fostered under the French marriage customs and marriage laws. It was natural, smarting as she was from the pricks of the yoke, that she should write as she did, and also it was natural that France should have objected to its arraignment at her hands. A great deal of what she wrote has been taken by



ALFRED DE MUSSET IN THE COSTUME OF A PAGE

By Achille Deveria



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prejudiced or unthinking persons for a tirade against marriage ; it was, rather, a tirade, not out of place in France to-day, against French marriage laws and customs, against the parental match-making still regnant there, against the legislation that holds a wife practically without rights,—a plea for union based on love alone, a union French law scorned to recognize. Fretting under the sting of misunderstanding, of adverse criticism, this restless young spirit threw all conservatism to the winds and set out for Italy with Alfred de Musset, the poet, determined to find her own, individual happiness, at any cost, in her work, in him, and in the sunny vales of Italy. It was a disastrous enterprise. Two persons of genius, one energetic, industrious, positive, demanding, the other nervous, lazy, self-indulgent, impatient, each looking for self-denial from the other, were bound to come to grief. From her, he wanted sympathy, indul-

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gence, a kindred spirit absorbed in his work ; from him she wanted a kind of worship manifested in conformity to her ideas ; she wanted to dominate and direct his genius, as well as manipulate her own, wanted to re-make his personality to complementary conformity with her own. Her idea of love was that it should meet her requirements in detail and to the full ; his idea of love was, for himself, exactly similar. In sorrow on her part, and in both anger and sorrow on his, they realized that not commanding genius alone can make two souls kin, and their ways parted. Each of them immortalized the enterprise in a contribution to French literature, and many another writer has made that sad fiasco between poet souls the subject of romance. It is one of the most historic episodes in French literary history, and however acrimonious may be the debate raging 'round it, the gist of the matter will always remain unalterable ; whose

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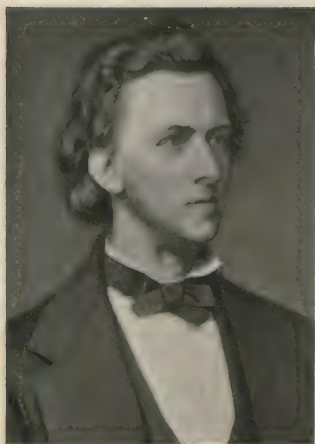
ever the fault, if fault there was, it was a superficial fault only ; there was, underlying it, the fundamental fault that each was self-seeking, and love cannot subsist an hour on that foundation.

Subsequently, George Sand followed many false leads in her passionate endeavor to know a great passion, to find some kindred soul that should exactly understand her own and unerringly minister to it. Now it was a poet, to whom she turned, now a musician, Liszt, the leonine, or Chopin, the gentle, the latter of whom suffered grievously because of her.

Chopin who, so far as adulation goes, and a poetic personality, was the Paderewski of his day, was young and very winsome when George Sand first knew him. Like most women of strong character, disappointed in her quest of the love that supports, consoles, understands, she thought to find happiness in giving such love to a man as she had hoped a

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man would give her ; but this is the kind of love that, splendid as it may be in its protecting power, a man seldom or never really thanks a woman for. It is too decided a reversal of attributes to meet with the approbation of any but a spiritually or physically demoralized man, and the pitiful army of women who have exercised it have either met with scorn in return or have poured out the treasure of their affection on a parasitical creature not worthy to be called a man. Chopin, for all his physical frailty and his moody weakness of a too-sensitive, melancholy temperament, did not scorn the strong, masterful affection George Sand gave him, yet neither was he quite valetudinarian enough to be content with it. There was nothing in the least ideal about their association, but there was a good deal that was very real in their mutual affection ; she had a great devotion to his genius and seemed to nurse and bear with the man for the sake of



FRÉDÉRIC FRANÇOIS CHOPIN



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the wonderful artist ; he had a weakling's appreciation of her strength, and seemed to cling to her, in spite of her impatience with his temperament, out of a sort of pathetic gratitude for her succor. The trouble with George Sand was that she was not able to give poor Chopin, living in the constant shadow of a consumptive's death, a sustaining, strength-supplying kind of love without making it so blunt as to seem an alms ; she had no tender, womanly dissimulation, enabling her to uphold while she appeared to cling, to cherish while she appeared to depend, and so save a man's sense of manhood. In fact, as Balzac, who loved and revered her as a great soul, a great artist, said of her, she was "not a woman."

"She is not lovable," he said, "and, consequently, will always be difficult to love. She is a lad, she is an artist, she is grand, generous, devoted, chaste ; she has the great lineaments of a man : *ergo*, she is not a woman. . . . She has

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lofty virtues of the kind that society takes the wrong way. . . . *Morally*, she is like a young man of twenty, for she is inwardly chaste and *prudish*; she is only externally an artist. . . . All the follies she has committed are titles to fame in the eyes of great and noble souls."

Doubtless she meant well by poor Chopin,—meant great, generous, manly things; but what he hungered for was little, tender, womanly things, such as she could not give. As she herself said of him, his great calamities he bore without a murmur; it was trifling, even imaginary, vexations, that drove him into a nervous frenzy. So, too, it was doubtless not supreme kindness that he wanted of her, but little tolerances, little humors,—such hourly indulgences as women give to the men they love, but such as George Sand, poor soul, not being a woman at heart, had no conception of. Notwithstanding, he wanted to marry her, and was broken-hearted because he couldn't. The break in their friendship

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was a harsh one. George Sand, out of heart-knowledge gained in her association with him, no doubt, wrote a novel based on a very similar situation, making her heroine, "Lucrezia Floriani," fall a sacrifice in the end to the parasitical selfishness of the sickly Prince Charles. She denied that she meant the novel to describe her own situation with Chopin, but the parallel was too dangerously close to escape general observation, and Chopin was cut to the heart by the gossiping publicity thereby given their affairs. The truth is, George Sand, though she may not have meant to hurt him, was undeniably tired of him, of his illness, his irritability, his dependence on her. Hers was a strange fatality ! With a nature that inevitably took the lead and maintained it, resolutely, she longed to find some one she could not lead, longed to find some nature so commanding that she might be content to subordinate herself and adore. If any one

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had ever mastered her through love, ever brought her strong, restless spirit to know love's surrender, what a story would hers have been,—its like nowhere approached in all her novels ! But with all the reverence paid her as an artist, with all the affection given her as a comrade and friend, with all the sycophancy of the designing many and the dependent doting of the devoted few, no one ever loved George Sand as she yearned to be loved ; yet always she kept on looking for such an one as for the savior who should redeem her life from failure.

With each disappointment she learned a little something, but only a little, for she kept on seeking, in the same spirit, for a good many years, looking high and looking low, for that unfound half of herself that should make her life complete in love, should lift it out of its plains and valleys of quest, onto the heights of rosy realization. "There is in me," she said, one day, to a friend, "nothing strong

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save the need of loving." When she was young and immature, she confounded, as young souls will, the need of loving with the need of being loved, and not until she learned to differentiate between the two, and to choose the former, did she come into peace. It was her personal misfortune, however, and the misfortune of the world, because of her genius, that she came into peace at least not through renunciation but through substitution. Retiring to her property at Nohant, she lived practically all the last forty-odd years of her long life in a patriarchal peace and plenty that occupied her mind and heart to the exclusion of wilder passions. There, surrounded by her children and grandchildren, by loving friends and admiring neighbors, and visited, as in a pilgrimage, by the great of earth, she passed in autumnal peace long years of great literary fecundity and great personal happiness. But her books, much as they took on, in later

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years, a deep humanitarianism, never forsook the idea that love, an absolute, complementary love between man and woman, is the supreme thing in life, before which all else should bow, whether law, or caste, or minor ties. She abandoned the effort to compass it for herself, lured into other paths of love by lovely leading-strings; but she never abandoned the conviction that such love exists, that it ought to exist for everyone, and that when it exists it ought to be a Moloch of sacrifice for every other bond and tie. She never had the divine experience, and it is the one great thing her genius lacked, of making complete surrender of herself and all her desires, for the good of one or the good of the many. Certain endeavors came to seem futile to her, after certain failures, but never stood she, fully-invested for conquest, and learned "to renounce, where that shall be necessary, and not to be embittered," nay, to renounce and thereby

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to wear the crown, to lose her life, for love's sake, and thereby to find it, to become the least of them that seek and, thereby, the first of them that have.

But what, through lack of the experience of this, she failed to embody in her books, we who will may read freely from her life, on which account, I say, as at the beginning, notwithstanding its mistakes and blemishes, it is too common to put a ban on George Sand's life as a subject for discussion. Even more than her books, her life has much to teach us all, much to make it repay meditation.

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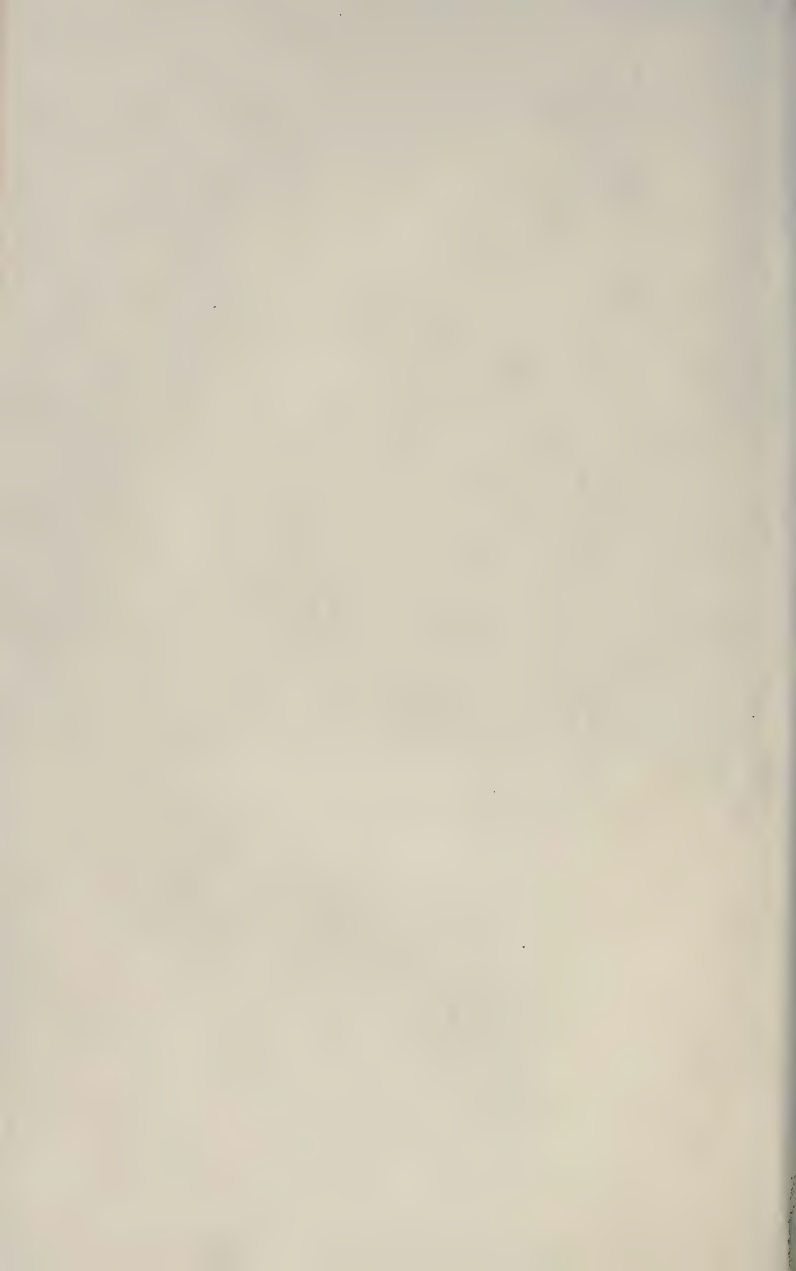
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## THE HEART-HUNGER OF MARGARET FULLER

**I**T was a plain little church, built with the scorn of beauty which the poor Puritans mistook for an essential of righteousness, and in one of its stiffly uncomfortable pews sat a plain little girl, enduring the long service as best she might, since endure it she must. Her father, a most pompous man, was the representative in Congress of this little town of Cambridge, Massachusetts, and this flaxen-haired, near-sighted daughter, whom he had set to the study of Latin when she was barely six and whose bookishness was a matter of neighborhood marvel long ere the years were over when she should have been playing with dolls, was the pride of his heart,—much more so than the



MARGARET FULLER  
From a daguerreotype



## THE HEART-HUNGER OF MARGARET FULLER

poor, pretty little shrinking wife over whom he domineered with small delicacy, and who now sat meekly under the shadow of his greatness, her youngest child by her side, and at the end of the long pew her eldest-born, Margaret, whose passionate, devoted love the little mother enjoyed no less because the part she played in her children's lives was that of quiet tenderness rather than of ambitious spurring.

The sermon was inexpressibly dreary, the staring, glaring interior of the box-like little church was devoid of either beauty or interest, and the people in the pews 'round about were plain-featured, stolid folk, unimaginative factors in a very prosaic, hard-working world. If the nervous, over-cultivated, under-cared-for child of Timothy Fuller, fresh from a world of books, of Shakespeare's brilliant human pageants, and the brave, beautiful Olympian world of Greek mythology, found nothing for herself in

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the droning doctrinal discourse of the preacher, still less was there to satisfy her in the aspect of his listeners. In the next pew to her sat a family who were her especial aversion, so much so that, years afterwards, she could describe them accurately.

“There were five daughters,” she said, “the eldest not above four-and-twenty, yet they had the old fairy, knowing look, hard, dry, dwarfed, strangers to the All-Fair,—were working-day residents in this beautiful planet. They looked as if their thoughts had never strayed beyond the jobs of the day, and they were glad of it. Their mother was one of those shrunken, faded patterns of women who have never done anything to keep smooth the cheek and dignify the brow. The father had a Scotch look of shrewd narrowness and entire self-complacency. I could not endure this family, whose existence contradicted all my visions; yet I could not forbear looking at them.”

Poor little childie! So early at war with the unillumined mass of human-

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kind! And how her just quarrel with that "working-day" family stirs us all to wonder how many times we may have so offended "one of these little ones," looking out at life with peering, wistful eyes and taking discouragement from our faces, set with the dreadful look of the disenchanted. But on this Sunday the piteously-beseeching glances of the little Margaret, straying back and forth over the congregation, came to rest, with a shock of delicious surprise, on a Being Beauteous.

In one of the box-like pews sat a lovely gentlewoman, an English lady newly come to visit in Cambridge. She was fair and sweet of face, was this lady, with beautiful hair, silken fine and most tastefully dressed, and all about her was an air of brightness and daintiness, a kind of joyousness in living that was all too strange to the unchildlike little Margaret. This bit of radiant femininity so completely filled the child's hungry want,

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so realized her ideal, that when she saw her she seemed to know her, although the lady was quite strange in Cambridge town. No matter ! She was none other than the longed-for ideal, suddenly made flesh, and come to bring the salvation of beauty to a forlorn little soul.

No one was unacquainted, for long, with any one else in the Cambridge of those days, and soon the lovely visitor came to know her little worshipper, and to be, from time to time, a guest in the quite pretentious home of the congressman. She could play the harp, could this wonderful lady, and paint in oils, and do a multitude of graceful, feminine things that the daughters of the Pilgrims and Puritans had not yet, in their strenuous, hard-working lives, found time to cultivate. And for all these gifts of fairy fortune, the child sat at her feet entranced, until the inevitable happened, —until her enslavement brought her much sneering upbraiding, many sting-

## THE HEART-HUNGER OF MARGARET FULLER

ing taunts from some quarter that she does not name, saying only that whenever she lingered in any task some one (her father, one more than half suspects) was wont to remark, "Her head is so completely taken up with ——— that she can do nothing." Alas, these beautiful fascinations of childhood and youth! Who is there that has not known their lovely spell, and who is there that has not been held therefor in sharp displeasure by his elders? "Only poets," said Margaret Fuller, in later years, "remember their youth," and Timothy Fuller was no poet, neither is it to be suspected of him that he ever, in his youngest days, entertained any rapt visions of the beautiful which were suddenly made real to him in the person of some zestful, buoyant, all-satisfying creature, old enough for reverence but not too old to keep it alive by tender tolerance of its tribute.

But, his taunts to the contrary not-

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withstanding, the English lady continued to represent the sum of things hoped for to his plain, gawky, Latin-learned but heart-hungry daughter, who said of this graceful, gracious gentlewoman, "She was the first angel of my life." She it was who, finding little Margaret weeping one day, gave her, for her comforting, a bunch of golden amaranths, or "everlastings," which came, she said, from Madeira.

Long afterwards Margaret wrote :

"Those flowers stayed with me seventeen years. 'Madeira' seemed to me the fortunate isle, apart in the blue ocean from all of ill or dread. Whenever I saw a sail passing in the distance,—if it bore itself with fulness of beautiful certainty,—I felt that it was going to Madeira. Those thoughts are all gone now,—no Madeira exists for me now, no fortunate purple isle,—and all these hopes and fancies are lifted from the sea into the sky. Yet I thank the charms that fixed them there so long,—fixed them till perfumes like those of the golden flowers were drawn from the earth, teaching me to know my birth-place."

## THE HEART-HUNGER OF MARGARET FULLER

Nothing, of all that Margaret Fuller ever wrote, is more characteristic of her than that little paragraph about the flowers from Madeira. There was much that was pitiful in her forced growth ; it robbed her of her just due of childhood, it ruined her health for her whole life and it isolated her, in a measure, from the majority of those who should have been her peers. But there was this compensation, if compensation it can be called : the omnivorous bookishness in which she was encouraged from her earliest years inducted her while she was still young and highly impressionable into a world of radiant fancy and splendid ideals, of all of which she was not sceptical, as are they who come to these visions of the poets, the philosophers, and the playwrights with an agnosticism born of dull experience, so that her imagination, naturally quick and fine, being quickened by the dreamings and imaginings of all the elect, she looked

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out upon life with a firm faith in its bright beauty, its brilliant possibilities,—and had to face discouragement! Fresh from the absorption of some vivid page describing a “Madeira, apart in the blue ocean from all of ill or dread,” the wistful, eager child had to come into contact with a prosaic world which took even its culture, mental as well as spiritual, with a certain Puritan sternness, as if it were a dose to be swallowed rather than a joy to be revelled in, and the repeated shocks were hard to bear, making an inevitably sad life for Margaret Fuller until, after many years, “perfumes, like those of the golden flowers, were drawn from the earth, teaching me to know my birth-place.” Then came a vision of a new heaven and a new earth, in which divinest understanding and tenderest sympathy for the unillumined took the place of scorn. But the way thereto-ward was long, as we shall see.

When she was thirteen years old

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Margaret Fuller, as over-developed physically as mentally for her age, had left what little of childhood was ever hers quite behind her, and was associating with her elders, who found her precocious development altogether remarkable, but not altogether attractive. As for the youth of her acquaintance, they had a wholesome awe of her, not unmingled sometimes with a good bit of envious scorn. It was a cruel position for a girl ; her mass of unassimilated knowledge and her lack of such worldly experience as transmutes mere knowledge into wisdom, set her apart from her elders, and her studious tastes, or more particularly her reputation for such, set her apart from her kindred in years and experience. All her life long people were shy of Margaret Fuller, fearing (until they knew better) her brilliant mind, and not suspecting her yearning, tender heart, but it is to be doubted if the attitude of her fellows ever had the

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power to hurt her that it did in those youthful days when she carried a young heart beneath an old head. As for her, she loved her kind, and ardently desired their love in return, but she was, though she did not suspect it, exacting: she wanted to be left, when her fancy so directed, to the enjoyment of solitude, and to find the persons she liked waiting and ready, when she emerged, to take up with her the threads of her reverie and spin them into glowing talk; and always she looked, in others, for some shining that bespoke illumination within, for some eagerness and intensity and steadfastness like her own, and, of course, while she looked for so much she got little, and only when she began to see what she could give instead of trying to see what she could get, in friendship, she began to be happier. Close acquaintance with her, however, almost never, in all her life, failed to win her not the esteem of her associates

## THE HEART-HUNGER OF MARGARET FULLER

merely, but their ardent, worshipful affection. But life is made up much more of the "touch-and-go" order of contact than of close associations; we are, to most of our kind, "ships that pass in the night and speak each other in passing," and the deep, quiet soul carrying treasure in the recesses of a rather unattractive exterior must always be envious of the cheery traveller of facile address who has the happy faculty of leaving a pleasant impress upon everyone he passes in the world's highway.

When she was twenty-three Margaret's father, greatly against the wishes of all his family, bought a farm in or near Groton, a village about forty miles from Boston, but then quite inaccessible from it. To Margaret in particular this new life, apart from books, friends, or the pleasures and educational advantages of Boston, was a severe trial, but she made the most of the scant leisure it left her, and added, in her enforced

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isolation, great stores to her knowledge of books, borrowing copiously from her friends at a distance, and writing them wonderful letters of comment when she sent the books back. Her life at Groton, outside of her books, was one round of domestic drudgery, teaching her younger brothers and sister, nursing her invalid mother and grandmother, sewing, and frequently doing all the work of the farm-house unaided by any servant. The strain of so much to do, coupled with the severe study to which she compelled herself, finally made her desperately ill, and for a time her life was despaired of, but she rallied finally, only to face the ordeal of losing her father,—that stern, vain, overbearing man, who, nevertheless, had won a place in his daughter's affections, based, one suspects, on her filial gratitude for his good intentions rather than on his inherent loveliness, or on a calm estimate of what, in her case, his good intentions had amounted

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to. He died October 1, 1835, leaving his small estate in an almost hopelessly involved condition, from which it was a weary time in being extricated. The months that immediately followed her father's death were very hard for Margaret. She felt obliged to sacrifice a long-cherished dream of going to Europe to study and travel, and not this only, but most of her tiny patrimony went, bit by bit, in the hard fight she made to secure advantages of an educational sort for her brothers and sister; and, not content with giving what she had, she decided to augment the family income by teaching.

Her first engagement as a teacher came through her friend, Ralph Waldo Emerson, then just begun to be the almost more-than-Jonathan soul-brother that he was to her during the rest of her life. She visited Emerson at Concord in July, 1836, and he it was who, later in the same summer, introduced Margaret to

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A. Bronson Alcott, who engaged her to fill a place in his Boston school left vacant by the retirement of Miss Elizabeth Peabody, a sister of the future Mrs. Nathaniel Hawthorne. The school of the gentle visionary was, however, short-lived, and Margaret's next teaching experience was at Providence, Rhode Island; here, besides her work in classes, she achieved, despite ill-health and many anxieties, an enormous amount of studious labor and a deal of valuable and eminently satisfactory experience in the matter of human relationships. Her pupils esteemed and loved her exceedingly, gave her their tenderest confidences, sought of her her best wisdom, and responded finely to her earnest efforts to give them something more than mere knowledge, to inspire and illumine their lives with a love of all that perfects the soul.

None but they who have taught, however, quite realize the wearying routine

## THE HEART-HUNGER OF MARGARET FULLER

of even the most zealous teacher, and Margaret's spirit soon grew restive under this and longed for freer flights. The literary life, "of Elysian peace, of quiet growth" and opportunity to put her theories into expression and into practice in a wider field than a girls' boarding-school, had long tempted her, and in December, 1838, she left Providence and took up her residence in Boston.

In November, 1839, began the famous Conversation Classes, which continued five winters, closing in April, 1844; these conversations attracted the flower of femininity in and about Boston, and did a great deal to spread abroad the fame of Margaret Fuller, who was never so thoroughly at her best as when talking, informally, to a roomful of people. To this period belongs, too, the Transcendental Club,—with such members as Emerson, Alcott, Theodore Parker, James Freeman Clarke, William Henry

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Channing, Ripley, and Orestes Brownson,—and their organ, *The Dial*, of which Margaret Fuller was the first editor.

There is a great deal, a very great deal, in the life of Miss Fuller during those years that one longs to expatiate on, a great deal that one longs to quote from her intimate, personal writings of that period, and from the descriptions of her given by one and another of her famous friends. But the limits of a short sketch which has for its main object some little outline of the wonderful woman's love-life, will not allow any detailed examination into her intellectual life. And yet it was out of the barrenness of that marvellous intellectual life that the love-life grew ! How, therefore, can one hope to make plain to any not already steeped in knowledge of Margaret Fuller's personality and the atmosphere in which she lived, the peculiar quality of the romance that came to

## THE HEART-HUNGER OF MARGARET FULLER

her, late in her life and under such apparently peculiar auspices? It is easily possible for an intensely sympathetic mind and heart to *feel* the life of Margaret Fuller, vividly, thrillingly, utterly; but she was so complex a personality, so many different things, to herself and to different persons, that she baffles phraseology, evades description; like the mercurial thing she was, she slips out from under the pen or pencil that would transfix and hold her, and leaves her ardently sympathetic but impotent biographer hopeless. She baffled those who stood nearest to her in daily association; not even Emerson's pen, at its lovingest, could draw her portrait. Pictures of her almost invariably catch her intellectual outlines and the mannerisms that accompanied them, and almost or altogether fail to show forth the glowing, emotional woman, of deep heart-hunger and infinite heart-capacity, who was the real Margaret Fuller.

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Somewhere in those years before she was thirty her life had held a romance. The secret of it lies locked in the archives of the Fuller family, who have all the letters that passed between Margaret and the man who won her heart and came nigh to breaking it, but so jealously are these documents and every bit of fact pertaining to them guarded by her heirs, that scarcely so much as a hint of the existence of such a chapter in her life has ever been made public. All we are permitted to know is that the eager affections of Margaret were engaged by a young man who, for some reason, eventually proved himself a sorry lover and hurt Margaret deeply. One can only suspicion what the matter may have been ; it would be a new light of understanding on her character, doubtless, if her family would unlock that casket of letters and give them to the world. Surely they cannot withhold them out of reverence for their sacred-

## THE HEART-HUNGER OF MARGARET FULLER

ness, for the most sacredly intimate outpourings of Margaret's heart in the years of her wifhood and maternity were published soon after her death. But whatever the reason, those letters lie locked away from all biographers, and those few who know their contents are sworn to secrecy concerning them.

Margaret's second effort to find happiness in romantic attachment was an episode of her years in New York as literary editor of the *Tribune* and close associate of Horace Greeley. During those two years her fame grew rapidly; her editorials on literary and reform topics were widely read and highly esteemed, and her brilliant conversations made her a star feature of nearly all literary and many other notable social gatherings of the metropolis. Among the people she met frequently was a German exile, a dabbler in things literary and philosophical, and, it would seem, a rather pathetic figure, chal-

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lenging the tender interest of Margaret, whose absorption in things German amounted to a passion. This affair, too, has been glossed over and covered up by Miss Fuller's family. Nothing very definite can be learned about it, save the one definite fact that he, too, bitterly disappointed the brilliant, heart-hungry woman, dealing her a wound that cut deep and cost her profuse suffering. The high caliber of this gentleman may be inferred from the fact that, after his break with Margaret Fuller and his return to Germany, he collected her letters to him and offered them to an American house for publication. With a far finer delicacy than the Teuton boor had dreamed of crediting them with, these publishers returned the letters to Miss Fuller's family, who still guard them jealously. The man of the first affair would seem, from circumstantial evidence, to have hurt Margaret more from a natural inability to satisfy her ideals

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than from any wanton disrespect of her. But the German was evidently an adventurer who made use of Margaret's fame and her attachment to him to further his own selfish and ignoble ends. He duped, tricked, made sport of her, and we do not need to know the details to feel the poignancy of her distress, and know in what spirit she uttered the passionate cry which, a few years later, poor Mary Ann Evans echoed,—

“I shall always reign through the intellect. But the life! Oh, my God! Shall that never be sweet?”

Reign through the intellect she did indeed, this marvellous woman, who was probably the vitalizing inspiration of more men of genius than any woman who ever lived. Her own remarkable powers she did not live to express in any adequate fashion, but her contact with the writing persons of her age (and she knew them all, pretty much, in this

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country and abroad, in greater or less degree) was full of enormous stimulus to them, and if the pages of literature could be sensitized to show her spirit's imprint, it is doubtful if we should find any other to personal contact with whom our treasured authors owe so much. But in this very intensity of zest, this very vividness of life and thought, lay her tragedy, for she gave and gave of herself, of her enthusiasm, her suggestion, her admiration, her every capacity for help, until, had she not been of inexhaustible mentality, she would have been drained dry. With an ecstatic ardor she projected herself into the pet pursuits and purposes of every one she knew, wearying herself beyond description in the excess of her giving, yet when she fain would refill her pitcher at the spring of some other person's enthusiasm, she generally found that spring either entirely pre-empted or quite dry. People absorbed from her

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like thirsty sponges so long as she continued to pour out, but when she looked to them for any slightest return of the courtesy, she found them pitilessly absorbed in their book-production, their love-making, or some other of their pursuits whose initial impetus she had probably supplied, only to find herself and her services alike superfluous once the enterprise was under way. It must have been when smarting under some such rebuff that she wrote,—

“There comes a consciousness that I have no real hold on life,—no real, permanent connection with any soul. I seem a wandering Intelligence, driven from spot to spot, that I may learn all secrets, and fulfil a circle of knowledge. This thought envelops me as a cold atmosphere. I do not see how I shall go through this destiny. I can, if it is mine ; but I do not feel that I can.”

Yet she could pray,—

“Father, let me not injure my fellows during this period of repression. I feel that when we

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meet my tones are not so sweet as I would have them. O, let me not wound ! I, who know so well how wounds can burn and ache, should not inflict them. Let my touch be light and gentle. Let me keep myself uninvaded, but let me not fail to be kind and tender, when need is. Yet I would not assume an overstrained poetic magnanimity. Help me to do just right, and no more. O, make truth profound and simple in me !”

Poor, loving, great-hearted woman ! She had scaled the Alpine peaks of learning, and when she had reached the top she looked back, far down into the happy, populous valleys, and envied those who had never learned to climb out of human company. If she had lived long enough to know *Aurora Leigh* how she would have given echo to these lines,—

“ To have our books  
Appraised by love, associated with love,  
While *we* sit loveless ! is it hard, you think ?  
At least 'tis mournful. Fame, indeed, 'twas said,  
Means simply love. It was a man said that :  
And then there's love and love : the love of all  
(To risk in turn a woman's paradox)

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Is but a small thing to the love of one.  
You bid a hungry child be satisfied  
With a heritage of many corn-fields : nay,  
He says he's hungry,—he would rather have  
That little barley-cake you keep from him  
While reckoning up his harvests. So with us :  
We're hungry."

Hungry ! That was what Margaret Fuller was ! Nature had endowed her richly ; she had been no laggard in the use unto increase of her inheritance, yet she spent the whole passion of her great heart in hunger for one close, warm, human companionship, and most of all, like the vast majority of women who are really good, she longed, with an unutterable longing, to be a mother. In a journal of her desolate years she wrote,—

" My child ! O, Father, give me a bud on my tree of life, so scathed by the lightning and bound by the frost ! Surely a being born wholly of my being would not let me lie so still and cold in lonely sadness. This is a new sorrow ; for always, before, I have wanted a superior or equal, but

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now it seems that only the feeling of a parent for a child could exhaust the richness of one's soul."

Dear heart! Her youthful desire of beauty, which she loved so passionately, had faded into a gentle regret; her ambitions to write, to achieve success, paled to secondary considerations alongside her overwhelming desire to sound the emotional life to its depths, to lose herself somewhere in the vast enfoldings of an unmeasured and unrestrained love. The piteous cry of her life was,—

"All life that has been or could be natural to me, is invariably denied."

In August, 1846, Margaret set sail, for the first time, for foreign shores, where unsuspected things awaited her. She journeyed much, in England, Scotland, and on the Continent, meeting nearly all the notabilities of that glittering time, before she settled down to residence in Italy, a country that came to absorb her

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passionate interest as much, towards the close of her life, as Germany had absorbed it earlier.

During the summer of 1847 she visited many Italian cities and went on a visit to Switzerland. In October, she was back in Rome again, and settled for the winter. It was in the spring, however, before she went on her summer round of sight-seeing, that she had a little encounter in St. Peter's which was fraught with destiny. She had gone, with a couple of compatriots, to vespers, and after the brief service was over had proposed that she and her companions separate and wander, each according to his own sweet will, among the innumerable chapels of the great edifice. Her suggestion met with approval, and the trio broke up, after appointing a meeting place where all should be, close by the main entrance, at a certain hour. Entranced by the beauty and majesty she wandered amid,

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or lost, without knowing or caring, in the mazes of that ecclesiastical labyrinth, twilight was upon her ere she was aware, and she hastened through the vaulted passages, past glowing glories of painting and gleaming shrines, alike enveloped in the gray of departing day, towards the appointed meeting place. Alas! No one was there, nor did waiting put an end to her anxiety. She ventured out and tried to secure a cab, but none was to be had. At length the poor lady, peering about her nervously through her glasses, fearful lest her short-sightedness be at fault, engaged the attention of a gentleman who stepped up to her and proffered his aid. She had some difficulty in getting on with this new acquaintance, as he knew no English, and she knew, as yet, no Italian, but they managed somehow, as two friendly spirits will, in despite of barriers, and under his safe escort she reached her lodgings. A day or two

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afterwards she observed the young man walking before the house as if meditating entrance. Evidently he had been attracted by the stranger, although their capabilities of communication were so meager. Then began a slight acquaintance, which rapidly developed into something much stronger after Margaret's return from her summer outing. In December, 1847, she was married to the young man.

From every possible point of view save that of Margaret and her young husband, their marriage was inexplicable. He was a scion of a noble but impoverished house, a youngest son at that, and, most hopeless of all from a pecuniary stand-point, he was a sympathizer with the cause of Italian liberty, while his brothers were attached to the very household of the pope. He was shy, quiet, unlearned, without fortune, worldly experience, or gifts of mind, and it was puzzling to Margaret's friends to

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know what she could see in him. Her own account of him, in her first intimation to her mother of her married estate (written after nearly two years of married life) is as follows :

“He is not in any respect such a person as people in general would expect to find me with. He had no instructor except an old priest, who entirely neglected his education ; and of all that is contained in books he is absolutely ignorant, and he has no enthusiasm of character. On the other hand, he has excellent practical sense ; has been a judicious observer of all that passed before his eyes ; has a nice sense of duty, which, in its unfailing minute activity, may put most enthusiasts to shame ; a very sweet temper, and a great native refinement. His love for me has been unswerving and most tender. I have never suffered a pain that he could relieve. His devotion, when I am ill, is to be compared only with yours. His delicacy in trifles, his sweet domestic graces, remind me of E——. In him I have found a home, and one that interferes with no tie. Amid many ills and cares, we have had much joy together, in the sympathy with natural beauty,—with our child,—with all that is innocent and

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sweet. I do not know whether he will always love me so well, for I am the elder, and the difference will become, in a few years, more perceptible than now. But life is so uncertain, and it is so necessary to take good things with their limitations, that I have not thought it worth while to calculate too curiously."

She was a foreigner, a Protestant, a woman of no rank ; permission to marry her would have been extremely difficult to obtain in any event, but in his situation, poor, politically at odds with his family, a sympathizer with the patriots, there was no hope whatever that he could publicly claim Margaret as his wife. During the early part of that winter of 1847-48 his father died, leaving a small estate, heavily encumbered and involved in intricate court processes of settlement. It was after his father's death that young Ossoli persuaded Margaret, in spite of her fears about her seniority, their disparity in education, and their alarmingly poor pros-

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pects, to marry him. This marriage had to be a secret one, no one, of all their acquaintance, knowing aught of it. It was easy to keep their secret, for a while. But very soon came the Annunciation Angel to Margaret, with his "Blessed art thou among women," and in mingled fear and joy and awe she looked forward to the answer to her passionate prayer,—

"O, Father, give me a bud on my tree of life, so scathed by the lightning and bound by the frost!"

There were many reasons why she could not stay in Rome, and as many reasons why he could not accompany her to the mountains where, apart from the heat of the Roman summer and the turmoil of that city of revolutionary unrest, she awaited the coming of her child. Alone, among rude, almost savage Italian peasants, tortured with anxiety about her husband, about their

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future, about the probability of her living through the ordeal that lay ahead of her, she passed the months of waiting, until, on September 5, 1848, her child, Angelo Ossoli, was born. A year later, in her first account of him to her mother, she wrote :

“What shall I say of my child? All might seem hyperbole, even to my dearest mother. In him I find satisfaction, for the first time, to the deep wants of my heart.”

It was Margaret Fuller's purpose to write down in a little book some of the deepest thoughts and emotions that were hers in the anticipation and realization of this wonderful experience of motherhood. Indeed, she confessed that she had gone so far as to begin it. If she finished it, which we may not know, it was lost, with the major part of all her papers, including her book on the Italian movement for liberty, a history of which those who saw it in

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Italy could not speak too highly. The world may well deplore the loss of that most carefully wrought Italian history, but more deplorable still is the loss of that little "mother's book," with its pages of maternal forebodings and maternal ecstasy. We can live true life and love true love, and get along very well without those notes on Italian liberty, but we are hungry and wistful for those notes on motherhood. For Margaret Fuller was a type who must engage the keen, personal interest of every woman interested in the great problems that womenkind are now working out in their struggle to adjust the larger intellectual life with the emotional structure and necessities of the eternal feminine. Probably no woman ever lived who had better opportunities of living the intellectual life in its most stimulating form, its widest reach of contacts. There was no one living who was not willing, and glad, to hearken to anything she might

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say. Poets and sages, journalists and philosophers, not only acknowledged her gifts, but acknowledged their debt to them. Her family adored her, and she came, as people came to understand and know her, to be an object of what Horace Greeley called "Oriental adoration" on the part of friends and acquaintances. She was, notwithstanding her lack of beauty and of natural qualifications for a social being, a commanding luminary in any company she was part of. Little children loved her, too, with passionate devotion; she almost never failed to find a worshipper in any child. She was the sympathetic repository of the secrets and purposes of not her friends only, but of many chance acquaintances who could not deny themselves the luxury of her kindness and her counsel. And yet she was, all her life, so pre-eminently a heart-hungry woman as to be, so far from the forbidding figure some persons

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thought her on account of her learning, a most piteously pathetic creature whose letters and journals one can only read with tear-blurred eyes and an almost intolerable ache in the throat. With every fresh tribute men made to her marvellous mind she seemed to be saying :

“ I might have been a common woman now  
And happier, less known and less left alone,  
Perhaps a better woman after all,  
With chubby children hanging on my neck  
To keep me low and wise. Ah me, the vines  
That bear such fruit are proud to stoop with it.  
The palm stands upright in a realm of sand.”

For many years of her life Margaret Fuller sought a mate,—some one to love her with intensity equal to her own, some one who should look out upon life with the counterpart of her enthusiasm, her earnestness, her ideals. She came to be very much more tenderly tolerant as she grew older, but her world was always offending her as those people in

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the next pew at church had offended her when she was a child ; almost everybody was too "workaday," too little on fire with beautiful enthusiasm, to suit her. She hungered for a celestial being of some sort, some one to lead her in the quest of beauty and the dispensation of comfort, as she led all her world. But that one never came. Her first passionate outpouring of love was given to a man who was "brilliant, worldly, selfish," and who "drew back from her." (This much I have from one who knew them both.) One really needs no more detail about the whole affair than that. Baffled, wounded, sore, she could not but let him go, for her woman's heart told her that when a woman seeks to hold a man in such a case, she lays up for herself nothing but her honor's hurt and her eternal pain. In New York, the German adventurer who so ill-deserved the tenderness she gave his woes, appealed to her through his need.

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Margaret Fuller had travelled far in her heart-history ! And when he, too, was found wanting in affection for her, she was well prepared to favor the suit of the young Marquis Ossoli, who was not brilliant nor enthusiastic, but who loved her, and who asked no better guerdon for his loving than the joy of ministering to her. She was drawing nigh to forty when she met and married him ; her youth was gone, and, being a woman, she could not but look back at it with piteous regret, and forward through the future years with lonely misgivings. Ossoli came, offering her true, unselfish love and devotion, and she, having learned that "life is so uncertain, and it is so necessary to take good things with their limitations," gladly accepted his affection, returning for it a love which she herself characterized as "most pure and tender."

Ossoli was with Margaret when the little Angelo came, but had to leave her

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the next day. Ill and anxious, she bided in the mountains until early in November, when, it not being possible, even yet, to announce her marriage, she had to leave her idolized infant among the peasant people where he was born, and go back to Rome, to write and work and avoid suspicion. When absence from him became intolerable, Margaret would steal away from Rome, and from her friends for a few days, to see her darling, but most of his lovely babyhood was spent apart from her,—a separation which was the supreme trial of her life, but had to be endured for the baby's sake and for their own.

In April, 1849, Margaret, shut up in beleaguered Rome, was appointed to hospital duty ; her husband was in the Civic Guard. At the close of 1848, Pope Pius had fled Rome, in February Rome was declared a republic, and the last of April the French, Spanish, and Austrians, representing Catholic Europe, had

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arrived without the gates of the city, which capitulated, after siege, on July 2. During those months of terror, Ossoli was daily in the most dangerously exposed places in the city, on his guard duty, Margaret was nursing, night and day, in the crowded hospitals, and word from their baby, up in the mountains, was not obtainable. On her last visit to him Margaret had found him recovering from a horrible attack of smallpox; what he might not now be suffering from, she did not dare assure herself. Between the agonizing sights of the hospitals, her hard, wearing work, her anxiety about her husband and her frenzy of worry about her child, it is a wonder that the poor woman survived that siege. But she did, and won herself a lasting fame as a very angel of mercy in those troublous times. With the fall of Rome the hopes of the Revolutionary party ended, and the young Marquis Ossoli, having alienated himself from friends and kin-

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dred by his adherence to the cause of liberty, left his native city and took his wife and child to Florence. He had no reasons left for caution, and Margaret had written to her people announcing her marriage, also the downfall of all their hopes, the meagerness of their prospect. They replied, urging her to come home, which she decided to do, as it was necessary for her to do something towards the support of the little family, and she felt that she could do better at home than in poor, disrupted Italy. She was, too, anxious to see her people and to introduce to them her husband and baby. It was decided that they would go, and there remained only the questions of how and when. Expense had to be considered, fast and costly ships balanced against those that were slow and cheap. Margaret dreaded a slow voyage because she suffered so much when at sea, but to go on a merchant-man sailing from Italy, would cost only

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half as much as to go on a packet from France, and the cheaper fare was as much as their slender means would allow. Moreover, they had to travel without a nurse for Angelo, and to provide, for his food, a goat, for milk, and other stores not on the ordinary ship's bill of fare. Whether it was the worry of puzzling about ways and means, or some actual premonition of evil, both Margaret and her husband were full of uneasiness about the voyage. He had been cautioned, when a boy, to beware of the sea, and she had long cherished a superstition that the year 1850 would mark some sort of an epoch in her life. She wrote,—

“I am absurdly fearful about this voyage. Various little omens have combined to give me a dark feeling. . . . Perhaps we shall live to laugh at these. But in case of mishap I should perish with my husband and child, and perhaps be transferred to some happier state.”

And again,—

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“I shall embark, praying, fervently, that it may not be my lot to lose my babe at sea, either by unsolaced sickness, or amid the howling waves. Or, that if I should, it may be brief anguish, and Ossoli, he and I go together.”

At the very moment of sailing, May 17, 1850, it was all she could do to stifle her forebodings sufficiently to force herself on board. It was a horrible voyage. Their captain sickened and died of smallpox, and was buried beneath the waves in the harbor of Gibraltar, where they were detained a week by adverse winds. Soon after leaving there little Angelo again fell ill of smallpox, and was only with greatest care slowly nursed back to health.

At length the New Jersey coast was sighted, the worn-out passengers, after two months and one day of seafaring, packed their trunks and prepared to land the morning of July 19. At nine o'clock the night of the 18th there was a gale, which by midnight had become a

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hurricane, and at four o'clock in the morning the ill-fated "Elizabeth" struck on Fire Island, and was slowly pounded to pieces in the howling storm. Twelve hours the little band on board sat face to face with Death, waiting; then came a final moment, and all was over. The body of little Angelo was washed ashore, but the bodies of his parents were never recovered.

Life and Love had brought many hard things to Margaret Fuller, but Death was kinder to her than they; it had been "brief anguish," and he and the child and she had gone together. As one of her friends wrote,—

"There was joy in the assurance that Angelo was neither motherless nor fatherless, and that Margaret and her husband were not childless, in that New World which so suddenly they had entered together."

Soon after the birth of Angelo, in one of her letters to her mother, Margaret wrote,—

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“In earlier days, I dreamed of doing and being much, but am now content with the Magdalen to rest my plea hereon, ‘*She has loved much*’ ”

She has no grave but the hungry waves, but over against her name wherever it is written let this be said of the woman whose wonderful mind is one of the marvels of her generation,—after surveying from the heights of clear vision all that there is in the kingdom of the intellect, she prayed that it might be said of her at last, with the Magdalen,—

“*She has loved much*”



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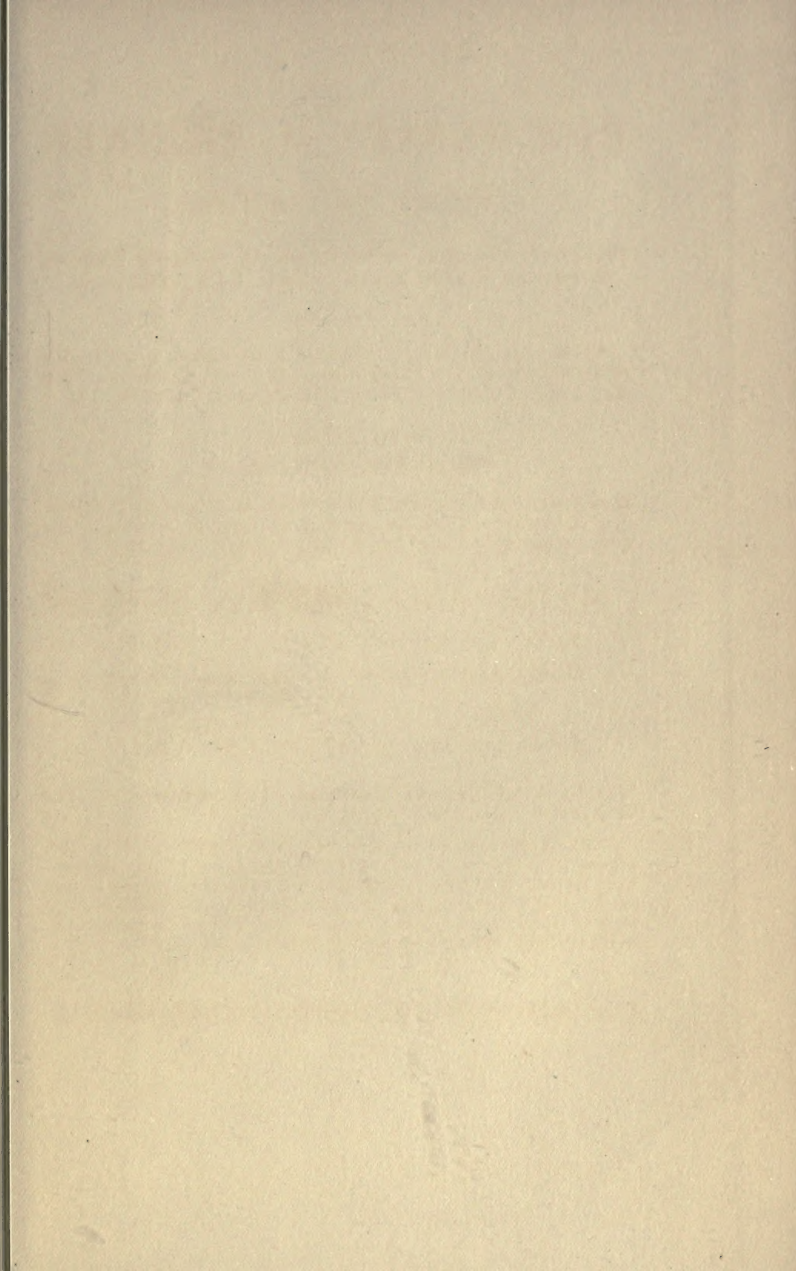
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